EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES:

Support Strategies for All Age Appropriately Placed Students

Submitted to:
The North York Board of Education
By
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June, 1990

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2 Summary

In the Western Region of the North York Board of Education, Age Appropriate Placement is the educational practice of placing students in grades according to their ages, not to their academic achievement. The rationale supporting this educational practice makes a strong statement in favour of the benefits children gain by remaining with their peer group and being offered support in that grade, rather than remaining in an earlier grade or being placed in an advanced grade and continuing progress with a group of older or younger children. (Marner, 1986) While some exceptions in age appropriate placement do apply (and these exceptions will be discussed later in this paper), statistics do not support grade retention for children as a learning strategy. (Funk, 1969; Holmes and Matthews, 1984; Jackson, 1975) However, statistics also demonstrate that placement only whether it is the same grade or in a higher grade will not obviate ineffective performance. (Norton, 1981)

But Age Appropriate Placement is not about statistics – it is about children and their success. It has been the goal of this project to offer a set of specific support strategies to improve success for all age appropriately placed students. This goal has been very difficult to achieve for the following reasons:
(1) The age appropriately placed student population cannot be defined because all students in the Western Region (with two exceptions) are placed in grades with their peer group according to their age, not according to their academic achievement. Therefore, one must assume that all age appropriately placed students are all students who are functioning both below the expected grade level and above the expected grade level but who are not retained in a grade or advanced ahead of their peer group.

(2) The definition in (1) includes then, a range of students who are working anywhere from one to five years or more behind the expected grade level to one to two years above grade level. The former is a much larger group of students.

(3) The main intended support strategy that was offered to groups of overaged students when Age Appropriate Placement was introduced in 1986 was the half-step upgrading program. While these programs were monitored at that time, further monitoring was not continued and these students can no longer be traced in the school system, therefore whether or not this strategy had the desired effect of upgrading student achievement over a period of time is not known.

(4) The intended, defined support strategies that are presently offered to age appropriately placed students cannot be monitored as they are meshed with support strategies for E.S.L., special education and strategies suggested by the school support team.

(5) There is a discrepancy in the practice of age appropriate placement in the Board of Education for the City of North York. While it has been an intended, focused practice in the Western Region (Marner, 1986), the same practice has not been applied in the same way in the Eastern Region (interviews, 1989).

(6) Age Appropriate Placement is not applied consistently between elementary and secondary grades. There is no defined standard that students in the elementary grades must meet in order to be placed in the next grade, however a standard is introduced in Grade Nine which students must meet in order to gain a credit.

(7) The intention of Age Appropriate Placement was to give advantage to children who were young for their years, to minority students and to those

overaged students who were more likely to become school drop-outs at the secondary level. However students who are placed without the benefit of specific, intended support strategies are not better served academically by Age Appropriate Placement than they would have been by grade retention since "**placement only** will not obviate ineffective performance." (Norton, 1981)

(8) The parameters of this document were defined as *strategies which the **regular classroom teacher** could use in his or her classroom to improve the outcome for **all** age appropriately placed students.* Of course, this task is fraught with ambiguity because all research literature points to the importance of support for the classroom teacher within the *context* of the school and within the supportive framework of the system. (Rosenholtz 1988; Hargreaves 1988; Sarason, 1981; Lezotte 1989)

This document concerns support strategies for all age appropriately placed students from three perspectives: firstly, it examines the process of age appropriate placement as it is currently practiced in North York and makes recommendations to refine the process. If these recommendations are acted upon, then age appropriate placement will become a thoughtful, planned individualized practice. Secondly, it relates the research findings from studies concerning effective teaching practices to effective strategies as teachers from North York have described them to the author. Thus, it has become a collection of views of researchers *and* North York educators alike that serve to demonstrate specific, definitive strategies that can be directly related to improved achievement and improved student outcome in the regular classroom. Thirdly, it points to the significance of the importance of teachers and the importance of teaching and to the inextricable link that exists between effective teaching practices and teacher recognition and satisfaction.

The paper began by examining the practice of Age Appropriate Placement and concluded that for most students, this is a sound educational practice. A strong statement is also made indicating that age appropriate placement must be a thoughtful, planned, individualized process if it is to present the opportunity for students to succeed. The recommendations for exceptional placements attempt to offer a framework within which these exceptions are best served. Following that line of thought, this paper points to the fact that placement only will not obviate ineffective performance. While recommendations for the refinement of the placement procedure itself are the genesis for improved student outcome , the question which still begged to be answered was "What support strategies can the regular classroom teacher use to enhance the learning of all age appropriately placed students once placement has been determined?"

In response to that question, the author then reflected on the recurring theme of current school reform which calls for the enhancement of teaching as a profession; for serious reflection and critical analysis by teachers about the meaning and scope of their work. (Rosenholtz. 1989) As a consequence of this reflection and a great deal of inquiry into the practice of teaching, this paper posited that there are specific strategies that teachers in effective classrooms use to enhance the learning of all age appropriately placed students. Not surprisingly, a parallel was evident between the strategies which research indicated led to improved student achievement and the strategies that teachers were using in the classroom to improve student achievement. Thus, it was the major undertaking of this project to demonstrate the link between the theory and the practice of effective teaching. *Effective Teaching Strategies* then, outlines the research findings which link the successful use of these strategies with the lock-step procedure of " how-to-do-it". The strategies are as follows :

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Effective Teaching Strategies

1. **Planning Structured Sessions**
2. **Skillful Classroom Management**
3. **Content Emphasis**
4. **Focusing**
5. **Assessment and Record Keeping**
6. **High Expectations**
7. **Creating A Positive Learning Environment in the Class**
8. **Instructional Cues to Increase Time On Task**
9. **Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill**
10. **Parental Involvement**
11. **Reflection On Teaching Practices**

While the review of research studies on teacher behavior and pupil achievement has come to the conclusion that no single teacher behavior has any significant effect on student outcomes, when clusters of behaviors are put together in certain describable sets of activities, there does seem to be relationship. (RISE, 1982)

Lastly, but certainly not least important, this paper looked at the inextricable link between the successful use of these strategies and the importance of teachers being satisfied and recognized in the workplace. Crucial to the understanding of the enhancement of teaching is the understanding that the workplace conditions that enhance teachers' learning opportunities, their psychic rewards, their freedom from uncertainty and their commitment to the profession is paramount in creating a compelling rationale for well-conceived changes. (Rosenholtz, 1989) Therefore, some recommendations are offered which reflect the importance of investigating the creation of a professional teacher culture. This has obvious implications for further studies into the recognition and satisfaction of administrators.

The strength of this document lies in the fact that The Board of Education for the City of North York has been concerned enough about the practice of age appropriate placement to have a classroom teacher investigate the practice and offer the results of the findings as support strategies that are viable, practical and promising. While the presentation of this discourse has left many questions unanswered and is briefly formulated in light of the scope of this project, the aim of this document has been to demonstrate the possibility for a vision of what specific support strategies may make the achievement of age appropriately placed students in North York better by enhancing teacher effectiveness. This document has the possibility to do more than remove one fly from that sticky web of educational theory and educational practice. It offers the opportunity to refine a practice that is sound in its philosophy. It offers the opportunity to create more effective classrooms through the recognition of effective teaching strategies and of what teachers are doing right in the classroom. And finally, it offers the opportunity to rethink the philosophy of "partners in education" for real educational benefit - that is, the higher achievement and improved student outcome for all age appropriately placed students.

Recommendations:

Develop a clear policy on parental involvement in the placement of children who are born in the last quarter and early part of the school year. This policy should include assessment of the child's social preferences as well as his/her level of maturity and academic interest. Parents-as-partners should be involved in the ongoing assessment and monitoring of these children. 1

Delegate special responsibility to one member of each school staff to act as an advocate for these children. 2

Group high-risk children so as to allow a more favourable pupil-teacher ratio. Consider school organization which offers smaller class size in the morning for core subjects and regular classes for other curriculum areas. This is particularly important for upgrading skills in the junior grades. 3

Monitor progress of children who are young for their years. It is important that this measure be sustained into the junior years where the age difference within the year may receive less attention than it would have in the primary grades. 4

Group the names of pupils on the attendance registers in birth order. Part of the problem appears to be that teachers can forget the age difference and assume that, in comparison with other pupils, such children are simply less able. Grouping the names in this way would be one easy was reminding teachers constantly of the special characteristics of this group. It would clearly be important that, if adopted, this device was used positively in order to raise expectations rather than, inadvertently, to lower them. 5

(Recommendations outlined by Mortimore et al., 1988, p. 268)

The Early Identification Process should be in place in all schools. The developmental gap between boys and girls of the same chronological age may be addressed through some of the above recommendations but should also be a consideration in Early Identification and Placement Procedures. 6

Classroom teachers should be given the specific resources for AAP students which they need to provide programs for students who are several years behind grade level. This would include talking books, self-correcting activities and self-correcting workbooks, etc., *specifically for AAP students.* These should be available from a central resource which stocks activiites which wouldn't require say a grade five teacher to provide a complete grade one program for one student as well as a Grade 4, 5 and 6 program for the bulk of the students. 7

The principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher and parents, should offer to a student who has missed a year, for whatever reason, a program that presents the *opportunity for improved academic and social equity with age appropriate peers.* Any practice of missing a grade entirely in order that a student join his/her same-aged peers should be closely monitored. The placement decision must allow for the academic and social/emotional adjustment needed to act as a supportive intervention strategy. 8

9	**Some AAP students *might* be offered a "work at home" strategy tailored to their needs.** This would take into account mastery learning, content area reading and academic gaps where applicable. However, this type of work-at-home strategy must be given serious consideration. While some children may have a positive working environment at home, other children's parents may feel inadequate in attending to such a demading task. In the latter case home learning may invite stress, frustration and may result in the practice or repetition of errors, at best.
10	**It is recommended that if schools want to work together with parents as learning partners that parents be provided with information and knowledge about successful components of learning through a number of organized sessions designed for parents such as the ten session program on literacy development produced by Strodun Publications (1990) and *Booktime* by Cheryl Paige [1990].**
11	**Some children will benefit from grade retention or extended exceptional placements.** While statistics indicate that it would be irresponsible to retain large numbers of students who do not meet an expected standard, it would also be irresponsible to indicate that no child would benefit from grade retention or grade advancement simply on the basis of their chronological age. Therefore it is recommended that students whose placement with age appropriate peers is in question, a committee should be established *at the school level* which allows for a sound educational decision based on the benefits of the opportunity of grade retention or exceptional placements for some students, e.g., for students whose great gaps in learning are better served in another grade. Needless to say, regular classroom teachers whose input is relevant should be included.
12	**The school committee should not have to receive the approval of the assistant superintendent for the sound educational, documented decision at which they have arrived.** Initially, the reason for the application for approval to the assistant superintendent was born from a desire to correct a practice which had resulted in *large numbers of students being overaged.* Since this is no longer the case, all research points to the importance of keeping school decision-making in the hands of the people who will be responsible for making decisions work. The assistant superintendent could monitor the *number* of exceptional placements annually for her/his approval.
13	**A method should be designed which identifies all AAP students. This may be done by way of *a bright sticker on the orange modification card.*** In this way, not only is this information easily ear-marked for attention from future teachers and schools but it also acts as an alert that a planned, thoughtful, individualized intervention strategy must accompany the placement.
14	**A brochure should be developed for all principals stating clearly the philosophy of the Board of Education for the City of North York regarding Age Appropriate Placement.**

A brochure should be developed for all parents whose chilfdren are Age Appropriately Placed explaining the philosophy of the Board of Education for the City of North York. 15

Any change in placement should require a meeting with the principal, parents, support team representative and an interpreter, if necessary. In the case where an interpreter is needed, additional time should be allocated for the conference to allow for translation and feedback. 16

Parents should not be led to believe that this is a policy to which they must comply, rather that Age Appropriate Placement is a sound educational practice which is most beneficial for most students. Research indicates that there is a small percentage of students who will benefit from exceptional placements, e.g., children young for their year. 17

A period of time should be estasblished over which the appropriate placement may occur, i.e., immediately – three years. This takes into account both learning styles and gaps in learning. 18

***Placement only* should not be offered as a solution to educational concerns.** Hopefully then, at least two intervention strategies should be proposed at the time of placement, i.e., half-step program and work-at-home program. Strategies can be focused more specifically after the teacher has evaluated student needs. 19

All students who are undergoing a change in placement should come to the regular attention of the Support Team (see Appendix 1:5) The support team should consider additional accountable personnel, "work-at-home" strategy and supervision, more favourable pupil-teacher ratio for some part of the day, and the time factor essential to the upgrading process. 20

In addition to having a *long-range perspective*, the improvement process should also be focused. Fullan & Pomfret (l977) found that innovations are more likely to be successful if the goals are. . .moderately complex. Therefore, it is probably wise to present a model for improvement which includes some of the strategies suggested in Part 2 (i.e., group alerting strategies to increase engaged time) and target one or two dimensions as a focus for getting started. Given that the improvement process will take *time* and that everything cannot be started at once, it is important to select an *appropriate entry point.* 21

The above type of identification process presents a good case for having an individual assume the role of guidance personnel in the elementary school. A qualified person is needed at the time of registration who : 22

1) is involved in a defined reception program
2) attends to the needs of the age appropriately placed student

23	**Research is needed to explore small class size as it relates to progress during that year, not achievement.** It is the position of this paper that small pilot classes composed of refugee concerns, ESL concerns, low-achieving students, students from dysfunctional families and *identified special education students should be investigated for impact of smaller class size for some part of the school day. Informal assessment and record keeping should accompany formal asessment.
24	**Clearly articulate academic expectations for student achievement.**
25	**Tell parents in plain language about the progress of their children and in so doing, prepare the parents for success.** Further investigate what parents understand about achievement when they read the junior report card.
26	**Tell students in plain language about their progess and clearly articulate future expectations and in so doing, prepare the students for success.** Further investigate what students understand about achievement when they read the junior report card.
27	**Provide a direction that will focus on the concept that being successful at school is related to achievement.**
28	**Every school should offer a home-school comprehensive program.**
29	**Assistance for remedial students should be calculated into the student-teacher ratio for remedial programs.**
30	**A pilot project for one family of schools should be undertaken to provide the opportunity of a "Saturday tutorial" for children who are at a great academic disadvantage in school.** Such a program would focus on achievement in basic skills. It would be taught by an expert teacher who used a collection of the effective teaching strategies outlined in this document. Students could be selected according to : 1) needs as determined by the school committee 2) degree of parental involvement and support 3) degree of student willingness to make a commitment to attend • focus on assessment and record-keeping in order to measure progress • each school would have a limited number of students that it could send • a contract must be signed by parents and students to emphasize the importance of this opportunity

Effective Teaching Strategies: Overview

While this document proposes eleven strategies which can be used in the classroom to positively affect student outcomes, its approach is unique in that it is based on what knowledgeable teachers *are doing successfully in the classroom.* The value of this document lies in extent; every teacher uses some of these strategies to some extent. Therefore, the strategies offer the opportunity for the refinement of existing practices and the introduction of new strategies into the teacher's repertoire. For example, a new teacher may wish to concentrate on *"Classroom Management"* which includes group focus, student accountability and attending to more than one issue at the same time. An experienced teacher may have more interest in *"Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill"* which includes *"Bloom's Taxonomy"* and the art of questioning. This section is not only for teachers. It is also for principals who are such important influences on teacher growth. Because every teacher uses some of the proposed strategies to some extent, knowledgeable principals can encourage teachers starting at their individual stage of growth.

The danger in proposing "Effective Strategies" lies in a facile understanding of teachers and teaching. *No single teacher behavior has any significant effect on student outcomes.* However, when clusters of teacher behaviors are put together in certain describable sets of activities, there does seem to be a relationship between teacher behavior and student outcomes. (RISE, 1982) Of equal importance is the recognition that teachers are professionals who are making hundreds of judgements every day. Therefore, this section is to be considered *one valuable tool* toward improving teaching excellence.

In this study of effective teaching strategies, an important book in the study of effective schooling will be considered: *"School Matters,"* by Mortimore, et al. This book is the result of a seven year study which was conducted in the United Kingdom to address the question of how schools vary and how they achieve their results. As a result, *"School Matters"* offers a detailed account of effective schools and their capacity to improve results for all children regardless of disadvantaged circumstances. While this study is quoted frequently in the following section, many other studies have found similar results related to effective teaching strategies. (Rutter, et al., 1975, Squires, et al., 1983, Weber, 1981, RISE 1982, Shalaway, 1988, Loucks-Housely, et al., 1987)

One behavior which is integral to most of the strategies is *teacher modelling of skills and strategies.* Modelling skills and strategies which are to be learned is of paramount importance. Frequently, age appropriately placed students don't understand what they are supposed to do or learn.

Two further points need to be made at the beginning, one concerns the value of **direct teaching,** the other the nature of **active learning.** In an attempt to value small group learning and focus on individualization, inadvertently, large group sessions using direct instruction have been devalued. Data from research indicates that neither self-direction nor direct instruction is the single best single way to facilitate learning. (RISE, 1982) There are assets and liabilities to each. Several educators have suggested that flexibility is probably ideal; that when the instructional objective is for knowledge in an unambiguous area, direct approaches should be used. When the objective is less clear, such as when higher level thinking skills of synthesis and evaluation are required or when attitude and values are involved, indirect approaches are probably best (RISE, 1982, p. 36). Such information will be welcomed by educators who have continued to see the value of relevant large group and direct instruction for purposes of presenting curriculum content to provide a broad knowledge base and to outline skill strategies.

The strategies are very briefly outlined in the following section but most are further explicated in the Appendix.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Strategy One
Planning Structured Sessions

Strategy Two
Skillful Class Management

Strategy Three
Content Emphasis

Strategy Four
Focusing

Strategy Five
Assessment and Record Keeping

Strategy Six
High Expectations

Strategy Seven
Creating A Positive Learning Environment in the Class

Strategy Eight
Instructional Cues to Increase Time on Task

Strategy Nine
Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill

Strategy Ten
Parental Involvement

Strategy Eleven
Reflection On Teaching Practices

Recommendations
To Enhance The use of Effective Teaching Strategies
To Positively Affect Student Outcome

"People are the ultimate source of renewal ." (Robert Waterman)
Teachers are those people.

1. **Investigate issues of teacher satisfaction and teacher recognition in the workplace.**

2. **Recognize findings that teacher morale is directly linked to learning in the classroom.**

3. **A focused effort is needed to recognize the importance of teachers and of teaching.**

4. **Teachers must be allowed time to think about effective teaching within the realm of effective schools.** Enable all educators in to be articulate about effective schools. If you're going to be part of an effective school, everyone on board must have a vision of where they are going. Teachers must see themselves as "part of the solution" toward better education.

5. **School plans must be established which include all teachers on staff.** This will involve lots of dialoguing, lots of discussion, lots of expression of ideas and even argumentation. Only after this thought is firmly established can the action begin.

6. **Schools must provide opportunities for reflection. This is the time when the community of co-equals reflects back to one another in a non-threatening atmosphere.** Staffs must feel free to talk about what went right and what went wrong as a team. The absence of this valuable reflection is an open invitation to teachers to do again next year what they did last year even if it's not working. (Lezotte, 1988)

7. **Schools must focus their efforts through *organized abandonment.*** In order to achieve excellence in the focused area, schools must answer the important question, "What goes and what stays?" Don't change the focus in an attempt to satisfy too many initiatives at the same time.

8. **Continue affiliations with higher level educational institutions.** This affiliation enhances the collegiality of teachers and inculcates teachers in a professional culture of teaching.

9. **Continue to examine the role of Program Leaders in the system.** It is crucial to recognize the important contribution of *teacher* collegiality and *teacher* collaboration to *increased student achievement.* Following that train of thought, professional development intended for staff must be meaningful to the staff.

continued

Recommendations
To Enhance The use of Effective Teaching Strategies
To Positively Affect Student Outcome
(continued)

10. **Encourage a sense of commitment to discuss educational issues in schools**. For example, principals could allow all teachers the opportunity to report to staff about learning and teaching, e.g., two teachers per meeting, 10 minutes each about some area of their program which they would like to feature.

11. **While it is recognized that teacher collegiality and teacher collaboration will lead to improved student learning and achievement, this is an attitude that must be fostered over a period of time. It cannot be mandated** When collaborative norms undergrid achievement-oriented groups, they bring new ideas, fresh ways of looking at things, and a stock of collective knowledge that is more fruitful than any one person's working alone. (Rosenholtz, 1989) An *evolving* school culture then could answer the needs of schools as they become apparent.

12. **Provide resources for teachers' professional development according to their staff or their S for G goals.** Allow teachers to have the opportunity to report back to staff on conferences and their own learning which may benefit others. This takes into account the important professional development of teacher-teacher influence.

13. **Plan to allow teachers better access to the tools of their trade** – such as access to computers and telephones, business cards and PROFS messages. The display of teacher certificates may also enhance the professionalization of the teaching culture.

14. **Adopt a motto *"Teachers Learn What They Live"***

If teachers live with a lack of focus in their schools,
They learn to focus according to their own individual goals.
If teachers live with criticism for every mistake they make,
They learn to hide their mistakes.
If teachers live without support for them in the workplace,
They learn that teaching is a very lonely profession.
If teachers live with the attitude that teachers are not important,
Then they learn that teaching students is not important.

If teachers live with focused organizational goals,
They learn to have focus in their schools.
If teachers live with the knowledge that reflection is valuable,
They learn to reflect on their teaching practice.
If teachers live with the notion that they are part of a collaborative team,
They learn to collaborate for success.
If teachers learn that what they are doing is important -
They learn to value the importance of teaching.

And then teachers teach students what they have learned.

(adapted from "Children Learn...")

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2 Acknowledgements

Although I am the author of this document, there are important people to be thanked for its coming to fruition; people whose voices are present here in various direct and indirect ways, far too many to name here but who are a tribute to the North York Board of Education. In my meeting with educational theory as a graduate student, I have been fortunate enough to have been encouraged by two teachers - the late Gerry McLeod and Andy Hargreaves. To the computer resource teacher, Rob Brown, to whom I am particularly grateful for his assistance in teaching me how *not* to put pen to paper. I am very indebted to Lynda Lyons and her efficient staff at Minkler Library for the time they spent doing computer searches, photocopying and offering advice about the myriad of materials available there. Ian West, Sandi Cordingley, Neil Williamson and Joan Leslie-Biro have faithfully read every page of my first draft and offered insightful comments and suggestions. I greatly valued and appreciated their input. To people who ispired me in one way or another, I have appreciated their interest in this endeavor: Kerren Thompson, Cheryl Paige, Robbie Robertson, Rie Threndyle, Penny Willert, and the many good teachers who took time out of their very busy schedules to reflect on the strategies which had become part of their repertoire in the classroom. I want to thank the North York Board of Education for providing me with the unique opportunity to pursue this special project and hopefully have some impact on the future achievement of age appropriately placed students. And last but certainly not least, I thank John Byrne, who supervised and supported the growth of this project in his forward-moving inimitable way. He helped me to clarify goals which, in the beginning, were murky at best.

This paper attempts to emphasize the important strategies which knowledgeable teachers use in the classroom. It also attempts to emphasize in an equal way that teachers are people who operate in a world of uncertainty and that teaching occcurs in a *context*. Keeping each section of this paper to several pages rather than a book means focusing on only a few features of those elements which are of special significance; and sorting among the readings and teachers' personal experiences in a highly schematic and abbreviated way. This leaves lots of room for omissions, overemphasis and other occasions for criticism. But I encourage the educator who reads this paper to take this limitation as an invitation to join in the gathering of resources and the sharing of information in North York, furnishing an ongoing investigation to positively affect outcomes for all age appropriately placed students.

In the Western Region of the North York Board of Education, Age Appropriate Placement is the educational practice of placing students in grades according to their ages, not to their academic achievement. The rationale supporting this educational practice makes a strong statement in favour of the benefits children gain by remaining with their peer group and being offered support in that grade, rather than remaining in an earlier grade or being placed in an advanced grade and continuing progress with a group of older or younger children. (Marner, 1986) While some exceptions in age appropriate placement do apply (and these exceptions will be discussed later in this paper), statistics do not support grade retention for children as a learning strategy. (Funk, 1969; Holmes and Matthews, 1984; Jackson, 1975) However, statistics also demonstrate that placement only whether it is the same grade or in a higher grade will not obviate ineffective performance. (Norton, 1981)

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(1) The age appropriately placed student population cannot be defined because **all** students in the Western Region (with two exceptions) are placed in grades with their peer group according to their age, not according to their academic achievement. Therefore, one must assume that all age appropriately placed students are all students who are functioning both below the expected grade level and above the expected grade level but who are not retained in a grade or advanced ahead of their peer group.

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(8) The parameters of this document were defined as *strategies which the **regular classroom teacher** could use in his or her classroom to improve the outcome for **all** age appropriately placed students.* This task is difficult because all research literature points to the importance of support for the classroom teacher within the *context* of the school and within the supportive framework of the system. (Rosenholtz 1988; Hargreaves 1988; Sarason, 1981; Lezotte 1989) Given that framework, it became clear that the goals of this document needed to address the following three components which are integral to offering support strategies for all age appropriately placed students:

First, to offer recommendations to refine the practice of Age Appropriate Placement.

Second, to propose support strategies which regular classroom teachers can use and will use to improve the achievement of all age appropriately placed students.

Third, to offer recommendations which must be considered by both the school and the system in order to support, recognize and encourage the successful use of the proposed strategies.

Because this document is intended for a diverse reading audience, its general format is divided into three parts to allow people to go directly to the sections which are most pertinent to them without having to read the entire document. However it is important for all readers to read this introduction as it provides a framework which, if missed, might allow readers to think that any one focus alone would be sufficient to improve the outcome for all age appropriately placed students (AAP students). The research necessary for the accurate completion of this document has been very thorough and takes into account both theoretical and practical applications of all of the concepts discussed throughout the paper. (See Appendix 1:1)

First, ***Part One:*** *Refining the Age Appropriate Placement Process* lists and briefly describes seven areas which must be addressed in order for the AAP practice to become a thoughtful, individualized, planned process. The seven areas are as follows:

I) Support for Children Who Are Young In Their Years
(2) The "Half-Step" Program
(3) Exceptional Placements
(4) Smaller Class Size and Necessary Resources for Teachers
(5) Abrupt Change in Philosophy
(6) Remedial Students
(7) Effects of Time in School On Achievement

The thirty recommendations which follow are an attempt to clarify and focus on the most important concept in Part One; that is, that **placement only, whether in the same grade or in a higher grade will not improve student performance.**

Next, ***Part Two:*** *Effective Teaching Strategies* comprises the greatest part of this document. Part Two suggests eleven teaching strategies which will lead to improved student achievement and improved student outcome. If there is one concept which is the single most important foundation of this document, it is that **success in school is inextricably bound with achievement.** The eleven proposed strategies are the result of a very careful selection process. They are the strategies which are repeatedly identified by theory and research **and** by effective, practicing North York teachers as leading to improved student achievement and improved student outcome. These eleven important strategies focus then not on what teachers are *not* doing in the classroom but on **what effective teachers are doing in the classroom.** To make this document useful for both teachers and administrators, the proposed strategies are then illustrated according to a step-by-step process that is easy to use for both teachers and for those involved in their professional growth.

The strategies are as follows;

Strategy One :
Planning Structured Sessions
Strategy Two :
Skillful Class Management
Strategy Three :
Content Emphasis
Strategy Four :
Focusing
Strategy Five :
Assessment and Record Keeping
Strategy Six :
High Expectations
Strategy Seven :
Creating A Positive Learning Environment In the Class
Strategy Eight :
Instructional Cues to Increase Time on Task
Strategy Nine :
Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill
Strategy Ten :
Parental Involvement
Strategy Eleven :
Reflection On Teaching Practices

Lastly, but certainly of equal importance, ***Part Three:*** *Support For Teachers* addresses the inextricable link between the effective use of the proposed strategies and the recognition of the value of what teachers are doing in the classroom. Suggestions for *what* the classroom teacher can do to improve student learning has been one of the commonplaces of educational research. So has the persistent failure at the classroom level of most efforts to secure curriculum implementation and planned educational change more generally (Huberman, 1981). Therefore, recommendations are proposed which recognize that teaching is not just a collection of techniques, skills and strategies; rather that teaching is a moral and professional craft.

The recommendations and the strategies suggested for use on the following pages provide for a variety of approaches which will invite success for all age appropriately placed students.

PART ONE

REFINING THE AGE APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT PROCESS

"...given the importance of the problem and the large number of children involved, there is surprisingly little valid support for the practice of grade retention."
(Flynn, 1989)

Part One : Refining the Age Appropriate Placement Process

Profile of the Age Appropriately Placed Student (AAP Student)

In North York, many students are age appropriately placed for various reasons. The following case studies present some examples of AAP students presently in North York. The commonality of all students is that they are working below or above the expected grade level academically to the extent that their regular classroom teacher must take into account the unique attention demanded by this student with special needs.

NAM : Nam is an 11 year old refugee from Vietman. He speaks no English and was not able to attend school in Vietman as he had to look after the younger children in the family. He will receive ESL support in a separate classroom for 10 hours per week. He is age appropriately placed in a regular Grade Six classroom for the remainder of the school week.

CATHY : Cathy is 11 years old. She repeated Grade One in another board of education. When she came to North York, she was in Grade 4 although reports indicate that she was not working at the Grade Four level. She is age appropriately placed in a regular Grade Six class.

MARK : Mark is 11 years old and he comes to North York from a very strict private school in Edmonton. Although he was in a Grade Six class in Edmonton, his parents feel that he is academically superior to the other children in his class. They want him placed in a Grade Seven class. He is age appropriately placed in Grade Six.

EMRAN : Emran was born December 14th. Most of his friends are in Grade Four or Grade Five. Emran is in a regular Grade Six classroom. He has been struggling academically throughout his school career. Since junior kindergarten, he has been described as "immature". He has been continuing his progress with his "same-aged peers" throughout elementary school. His Grade Six teacher describes him as an unmotivated boy who is "working at a grade three level" in math and language. Psychological tests indicate that he is of average ability.

JANGSHIN : Jangshin is an 11 year old girl who arrived in North York from Korea three years ago. She is presently age appropriately placed full-time in a regular Grade Six classroom where she demonstrates above average ability in mechanical mathematical calculations although problem solving ability and reasoning ability indicate that she is not able to apply her skills. Assessment tests indicate that her decoding ability in language is at a Grade Five level but comprehension is at a Grade Three level.

EILEEN : Eileen was accelerated in another board in Ontario. When she came to North York, she was in Grade Four but she is placed in Grade Three for two weeks and then the parents will have a meeting with the principal about her placement.

JOHN : John is a very small boy who has arrived in North York from Vietman where he attended school. He registers in Grade Four with his 9 year old peers. When he proves to be very precocious socially, an investigation reveals that John is 12 years old. His date of birth was not registered until two years after his birth in order to postpone the greatly-feared conscription in his own country. His birthdate of January 1st is also found to be incorrect. Multicultural assessment reveals John is illiterate in his own language although computational math skills are close to average.

Age Appropriate Placement takes into account then, all of these students. Some of them appear in most classes in North York, while almost all of them appear in others. While there are allowances made for assessment of these placements on their own merit, all but a very few will remain Age Appropriately Placed with other students the same age who are experiencing similar developmental stages.

Age Appropiate Placement (AAP) – Overview

In April of 1986, a memo from R. Marner was sent out to all principals in the Western Region of North York stating that the major objective of the Western Region was to achieve age appropriate grade placements for all students at the elementary and intermediate levels (see Appendix 1:2). For the purposes of this paper, Age Appropriate Placement has been defined as *the practice of placing students in regular classrooms according to their chronological age, not according to their academic ability*. In the Western Region of North York, it is believed that most children learn better when they are following, with their age group, programs adapted to their level of development and to their intellectual aptitude (CEA, 1989). By September of 1987, most students in the Western Region were either placed in grade according to their chronological age or were in the process of completing what research calls a "half-step" porogram; that is, a program where a class of overaged students were offered the opportunity to "catch up" with their same-aged peers by completing either three grades in two years or two grades in one year (Walder, et al.; Clooney, et al.; Matheson, et al.) . Curriculum emphasis in the half-step program was modified appropriately.

Age Appropiate Placement then, at the time of the writing of this document, *is not a policy of the Board of Education for the City of North York*. Rather, it is a "preferred statement" or a "sound educational practice" which has been a focused practice since the distribution of this memo in the Western Region of North York in April, 1986.

Synthesis of Research Findings

While there is no bulk of research on the practice of upgrading overage students by placing them with their peer group in regular grade classrooms according to age, there is a wealth of literature on the practice of grade promotion and grade retention. A review of the most instructive publications treating the retention/promotion issue can be found in Appendix 1:3.

Conclusions drawn from investigations of the literature point to six facts which are of particular relevance for those who remain convinced of the value of grade retention as an educational practice. These facts do not preclude in any way the fact that a very small percentage of students will benefit from exceptional placements.

- **Retention rarely improves the academic achievement of students :** Unless very specific conditions are met, in many studies 20 - 40 per cent of retained students did poorer work in the year thay were retained (Funk, 1969), many students achieved similar results and of students who did improve in the retained year, most returned to previous academic standings within three years.

- **There is evidence that teachers' decisions on student retention reflect their basic beliefs regarding education and child development :** Smith and Shepard's (1985) study found that teachers who hold nativist beliefs (holding that student development and learning are primarily internal processes that cannot be accelerated or enhanced by teacher intervention) tend to retain higher proportions of students than teachers who hold remediationist beliefs (holding that student learning and development are malleable). This infers that a child's promotion is dependent on which teacher she or he gets that school year.

- **Students who are retained are more likely to become school dropouts:** The dropout rate for students entering grade 9 overaged (15 or over) is three to four times higher than that of students who enter at age 14 (Marner, Funk, et al.) A system that ignores these statistics only offers advantage to the advantaged.

- **The majority of students who repeat a year are boys, children born in the latter half of the year or children from minority groups.**

- **The inference remains that those students who were retained were also the ones who were experiencing the most difficulty.**

- **The threat of failure does not act as a motivating force for weak students.**

- **Grade retention tends to be punitive in nature.**

- **Failure should be related to specific tasks, not to whole grades.**

In conclusion, due to flawed methodology, research statistics *may* be used to support grade retention according to the bias of the study design. However, given the importance of the problem and the large number of children involved, there is surprisingly little valid support for the *practice* of grade retention (Flynn, 1989, p. 1). The research findings from 1911 to the present indicate that retention is not accomplishing the objectives of remedying inadequate academic progress orof aiding the development of students judged to be immature. (Flynn, 1985, p. 6). In light of this evidence, Age Appropriate Placement is a sound educational practice. However, it cannot be overstated that simply placing students who are experiencing serious academic or adjustment difficulties according to age is not a support strategy. *Continuation of failure, whether in the same grade as the previous year or in a more advanced grade level, will not obviate ineffective performance. (Norton, 1981, p. 205)*

Concerns Surrounding the Practice of AAP

Concern One :
Support For Boys and Children Who Are Young In Their Years

Throughout this investigation, several people, (teachers and parents) spoke about placement of their own children who were born toward the beginning or end of the school year. In these discussions, two views were expressed. Some indicated that their children were successful in the programs although their child was the youngest in the class. Some said the opposite – that their children always played with children from a younger grade because they were actually the same age give or take a month or two as those children and never fit in with their "same-aged " peers throughout their school careers. This second group of children was unsuccessful in their school years certainly in part, as a result of **placement only.** If these children were boys, they were one and a half years developmentally behind their "same-aged" female peers. (Piaget, 1930, 1950, 1951) (Mortimore, et al., 1988) The inappropriate placement and/or inappropriate expectations for these particular children will put them in a position where they do not have an equal opportunity to achieve. Other ways of supporting these children need to be considered.

Concern Two:
The Half-step Program

The "half-step program" is the name which research gives to a program which focuses on upgrading the skills which students need to continue their learning in a higher grade. Such programs in North York were designed in 1985 by several principals in response to concerns around large numbers of overaged students in the Western region who were being upgraded to join thier age appropriate peers. (J. Byrne, K. Wilson, J. Wells, I. West, R. Marner, 1985) Interviews with initiators and teachers of these programs indicate that they were structured to account for the learning essential to cover either two grades in one year or three grades in two years. Principals involved in such programs put much needed time and planning into preparing the receiving teacher and/or receiving schools to make the transition as smooth as possible. These programs have their basis in research (see Appendix 1:4).

Concern Three :
Exceptional Placement

While children young for their year may require exceptional placements, other students may be considered for changes in placement. Since the introduction of Age Appropriate Placement in North York (1986), all students who have had a placement change have had their placement re-allocated in one of three ways :

1) at the secretary's desk
2) through a meeting with the principal and the parents in which the parents are informed that this is the educational practice in North York
3) through a meeting with the principal and parents in which a time line for placement is established and intervention strategies are proposed
4) through a meeting with the above mentioned and the assistant superintendent.

Placements of most concern are those which occur in which occur in categories 1, 2, and 4.

Concern Four: Smaller Class Size and Further Research: Necessary Resources for Teachers

One of the reasons why the positive impact of smaller class size has not generally been found in past studies may be because the influences of teacher behavior and practice were not taken into account, and, therefore, the impact of class size may have been masked. Mortimore, et al., (1988) in their study "*School Matters* " concluded that teachers of smaller classes tended to **praise or make more neutral comments about pupils' behavior, rather then becoming angry with children.** Further investigation revealed that teachers of smaller classes employed **higher levels of interaction** with individuals than teachers of larger classes. For example, one variable measured related class size to mathematics progress. Pupils in schools where classes had an average of 24 or fewer pupils generally made better progress than schools with larger classes, in particular, those with 27 or more pupils. **This result is important because the majority of previous studies have generally found class size to be unimportant in explaining pupils' achievement. (Simpson, 1982)** The implications for further investigation of the significant relationship between between class size and the experience of students addressed by the teacher, praise and interaction with students and bonding experiences with disadvantaged students are of crucial importance.

A second related point concerning the teacher's ability to address individual needs within the realm of a regular class size is that of necessary resources. Talking books, picture dictionaries, high-interest and low vacabulary materials are very much needed especially for teachers of junior and intermediate classes.

Concern Five :
Abrupt Change in Philosophy

One consequence of the age appropriate placement process as it is practiced in the elementary schools is that **students do not have the experience of being informed that they have not met a grade standard** and that they therefore must repeat a whole subject area until they reach a certain expectation. Several students came to the attention of the author when they reached Grade Nine as they were informed at that time that they had failed a credit although in fact they had failed to meet a standard long before that. This example points to the importance firstly, of establishing a grade standard and secondly, of documenting and informing students and parents that students are not meeting that grade standard. A clear articulation of student achievement is needed.

Concern Six :
Remedial Students

Remedial students are students who have been taught a concept, a skill or a lesson but who have failed to grasp the material which has been taught. Thus, there is a need to *remediate* the learning. Presently in North York, some of these students are recommended for remedial assistance in home-school comprehensive programs. Howver, it is significant to note that not all of these recommended students actually receive this remedial assitance as it is not calculated in the student-teacher ratio for home-school comprehensive programs.

Concern Seven:
Effects of Time On Instruction

Children who enter the North York school system with little or no previous schooling and are age appropriately placed do require creative programming. **These students are not remedial students** as they have not been taught concepts, skills or lessons in the first place. No amount of effective teaching can replace the years (in many cases) of little, interrupted or no previous schooling. It is crucial that these students be offered an opportunity to approach a higher standard of achievement in a shorter period of time. The answer lies in the expanded role of schooling for the nineties. Schools must reflect on the positive effects of time on instruction. This conclusion has been drawn from several major studies of school and classroom effectiveness in raising pupil achievement of basic skills (RISE, 1982).

Recommendations:

Develop a clear policy on parental involvement in the placement of children who are born in the last quarter and early part of the school year. This policy should include assessment of the child's social preferences as well as his/her level of maturity and academic interest. Parents-as-partners should be involved in the ongoing assessment and monitoring of these children.	1
Delegate special responsibility to one member of each school staff to act as an advocate for these children.	2
Group high-risk children so as to allow a more favourable pupil-teacher ratio. Consider school organization which offers smaller class size in the morning for core subjects and regular classes for other curriculum areas. This is particularly important for upgrading skills in the junior grades.	3
Monitor progress of children who are young for their years. It is important that this measure be sustained into the junior years where the age difference within the year may receive less attention than it would have in the primary grades.	4
Group the names of pupils on the attendance registers in birth order. Part of the problem appears to be that teachers can forget the age difference and assume that, in comparison with other pupils, such children are simply less able. Grouping the names in this way would be one easy was reminding teachers constantly of the special characteristics of this group. It would clearly be important that, if adopted, this device was used positively in order to raise expectations rather than, inadvertently, to lower them. (Recommendations outlined by Mortimore et al., 1988, p. 268)	5
The Early Identification Process should be in place in all schools. The developmental gap between boys and girls of the same chronological age may be addressed through some of the above recommendations but should also be a consideration in Early Identification and Placement Procedures.	6
Classroom teachers should be given the specific resources for AAP students which they need to provide programs for students who are several years behind grade level. This would include talking books, self-correcting activities and self-correcting workbooks, etc., *specifically for AAP students*. These should be available from a central resource which stocks activiites which wouldn't require say a grade five teacher to provide a complete grade one program for one student as well as a Grade 4, 5 and 6 program for the bulk of the students.	7
The principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher and parents, should offer to a student who has missed a year, for whatever reason, a program that presents the *opportunity for improved academic and social equity with age appropriate peers.* Any practice of missing a grade entirely in order that a student join his/her same-aged peers should be closely monitored. The placement decision must allow for the academic and social/emotional adjustment needed to act as a supportive intervention strategy.	8

9	**Some AAP students *might* be offered a "work at home" strategy tailored to their needs.** This would take into account mastery learning, content area reading and academic gaps where applicable. However, this type of work-at-home strategy must be given serious consideration. While some children may have a positive working environment at home, other children's parents may feel inadequate in attending to such a demading task. In the latter case home learning may invite stress, frustration and may result in the practice or repetition of errors, at best.
10	**It is recommended that if schools want to work together with parents as learning partners that parents be provided with information and knowledge about successful components of learning through a number of organized sessions designed for parents such as the ten session program on literacy development produced by Strodun Publications (1990) and *Booktime* by Cheryl Paige [1990].**
11	**Some children will benefit from grade retention or extended exceptional placements.** While statistics indicate that it would be irresponsible to retain large numbers of students who do not meet an expected standard, it would also be irresponsible to indicate that no child would benefit from grade retention or grade advancement simply on the basis of their chronological age. Therefore it is recommended that students whose placement with age appropriate peers is in question, a committee should be established *at the school level* which allows for a sound educational decision based on the benefits of the opportunity of grade retention or exceptional placements for some students, e.g., for students whose great gaps in learning are better served in another grade. Needless to say, regular classroom teachers whose input is relevant should be included.
12	**The school committee should not have to receive the approval of the assistant superintendent for the sound educational, documented decision at which they have arrived.** Initially, the reason for the application for approval to the assistant superintendent was born from a desire to correct a practice which had resulted in *large numbers of students being overaged.* Since this is no longer the case, all research points to the importance of keeping school decision-making in the hands of the people who will be responsible for making decisions work. The assistant superintendent could monitor the *number* of exceptional placements annually for her/his approval.
13	**A method should be designed which identifies all AAP students. This may be done by way of *a bright sticker on the orange modification card.*** In this way, not only is this information easily ear-marked for attention from future teachers and schools but it also acts as an alert that a planned, thoughtful, individualized intervention strategy must accompany the placement.
14	**A brochure should be developed for all principals stating clearly the philosophy of the Board of Education for the City of North York regarding Age Appropriate Placement.**

A brochure should be developed for all parents whose children are Age Appropriately Placed explaining the philosophy of the Board of Education for the City of North York.	15
Any change in placement should require a meeting with the principal, parents, support team representative and an interpreter, if necessary. In the case where an interpreter is needed, additional time should be allocated for the conference to allow for translation and feedback.	16
Parents should not be led to believe that this is a policy to which they must comply, rather that Age Appropriate Placement is a sound educational practice which is most beneficial for most students. Research indicates that there is a small percentage of students who will benefit from exceptional placements, e.g., children young for their year.	17
A period of time should be estasblished over which the appropriate placement may occur, i.e., immediately – three years. This takes into account both learning styles and gaps in learning.	18
***Placement only* should not be offered as a solution to educational concerns.** Hopefully then, at least two intervention strategies should be proposed at the time of placement, i.e., half-step program and work-at-home program. Strategies can be focused more specifically after the teacher has evaluated student needs.	19
All students who are undergoing a change in placement should come to the regular attention of the Support Team (see Appendix 1:5) The support team should consider additional accountable personnel, "work-at-home" strategy and supervision, more favourable pupil-teacher ratio for some part of the day, and the time factor essential to the upgrading process.	20
In addition to having a *long-range perspective*, the improvement process should also be focused. Fullan & Pomfret (l977) found that innovations are more likely to be successful if the goals are. . .moderately complex. Therefore, it is probably wise to present a model for improvement which includes some of the strategies suggested in Part 2 (i.e., group alerting strategies to increase engaged time) and target one or two dimensions as a focus for getting started. Given that the improvement process will take *time* and that everything cannot be started at once, it is important to select an *appropriate entry point.*	21
The above type of identification process presents a good case for having an individual assume the role of guidance personnel in the elementary school. A qualified person is needed at the time of registration who : 1) is involved in a defined reception program 2) attends to the needs of the age appropriately placed student	22

23	**Research is needed to explore small class size as it relates to progress during that year, not achievement.** It is the position of this paper that small pilot classes composed of refugee concerns, ESL concerns, low-achieving students, students from dysfunctional families and *identified special education students should be investigated for impact of smaller class size for some part of the school day. Informal assessment and record keeping should accompany formal asessment.
24	**Clearly articulate academic expectations for student achievement.**
25	**Tell parents in plain language about the progress of their children and in so doing, prepare the parents for success.** Further investigate what parents understand about achievement when they read the junior report card.
26	**Tell students in plain language about their progess and clearly articulate future expectations and in so doing, prepare the students for success.** Further investigate what students understand about achievement when they read the junior report card.
27	**Provide a direction that will focus on the concept that being successful at school is related to achievement.**
28	**Every school should offer a home-school comprehensive program.**
29	**Assistance for remedial students should be calculated into the student-teacher ratio for remedial programs.**
30	**A pilot project for one family of schools should be undertaken to provide the opportunity of a "Saturday tutorial" for children who are at a great academic disadvantage in school.** Such a program would focus on achievement in basic skills. It would be taught by an expert teacher who used a collection of the effective teaching strategies outlined in this document. Students could be selected according to : 1) needs as determined by the school committee 2) degree of parental involvement and support 3) degree of student willingness to make a commitment to attend • focus on assessment and record-keeping in order to measure progress • each school would have a limited number of students that it could send • a contract must be signed by parents and students to emphasize the importance of this opportunity

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EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

PART TWO

There are specific instructional strategies that work – those expert teachers swear by and researchers have demonstrated to be effective. The result is that the students whose teachers use these strategies learn and achieve more than other students.

(Shalaway, 1988)

While this document proposes eleven strategies which can be used in the classroom to positively affect student outcomes, its approach is unique in that it is based on what knowledgeable teachers *are doing successfully in the classroom.* The value of this document lies in extent; every teacher uses some of these strategies to some extent. Therefore, the strategies offer the opportunity for the refinement of existing practices and the introduction of new strategies into the teacher's repertoire. For example, a new teacher may wish to concentrate on *"Classroom Management"* which includes group focus, student accountability and attending to more than one issue at the same time. An experienced teacher may have more interest in *"Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill"* which includes *"Bloom's Taxonomy"* and the art of questioning. This section is not only for teachers. It is also for principals who are such important influences on teacher growth. Because every teacher uses some of the proposed strategies to some extent, knowledgeable principals can encourage teachers starting at their individual stage of growth.

The danger in proposing "Effective Strategies" lies in a facile understanding of teachers and teaching. *No single teacher behavior has any significant effect on student outcomes.* However, when clusters of teacher behaviors are put together in certain describable sets of activities, there does seem to be a relationship between teacher behavior and student outcomes. (RISE, 1982) Of equal importance is the recognition that teachers are professionals who are making hundreds of judgements every day. Therefore, this section is to be considered *one valuable tool* toward improving teaching excellence.

In this study of effective teaching strategies, an important book in the study of effective schooling will be considered: *"School Matters,"* by Mortimore, et al. This book is the result of a seven year study which was conducted in the United Kingdom to address the question of how schools vary and how they achieve their results. As a result, *"School Matters"* offers an detailed account of effective schools and their capacity to improve results for all children regardless of disadvantaged circumstances. While this study is quoted frequently in the following section, many other studies have found similar results related to effective teaching strategies. (Rutter, et al., 1975, Squires, et al., 1983, Weber, 1981, RISE 1982, Shalaway, 1988, Loucks-Housely, et al., 1987)

One behavior which is integral to most of the strategies is *teacher modelling of skills and strategies.* Modelling skills and strategies which are to be learned is of paramount importance. Frequently, age appropriately placed students don't understand what they are supposed to do or learn.

Two further points need to be made at the beginning, one concerns the value of **direct teaching,** the other the nature of **active learning.** In an attempt to value small group learning and focus on individualization, inadvertently, large group sessions using direct instruction have been devalued. Data from research indicates that neither self-direction nor direct instruction is the single best single way to facilitate learning. (RISE, 1982) There are assets and liabilities to each. Several educators have suggested that flexibility is probably ideal; that when the instructional objective is for knowledge in an unambiguous area, direct approaches should be used. When the objective is less clear, such as when higher level thinking skills of synthesis and evaluation are required or when attitude and values are involved, indirect approaches are probably best (RISE, 1982, p. 36). Such information will be welcomed by educators who have continued to see the value of relevant large group and direct instruction for purposes of presenting curriculum content to provide a broad knowledge base and to outline skill strategies.

The strategies are very briefly outlined in the following section but most are further explicated in the Appendix.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Strategy One
Planning Structured Sessions

Strategy Two
Skillful Class Management

Strategy Three
Content Emphasis

Strategy Four
Focusing

Strategy Five
Assessment and Record Keeping

Strategy Six
High Expectations

Strategy Seven
Creating A Positive Learning Environment in the Class

Strategy Eight
Instructional Cues to Increase Time on Task

Strategy Nine
Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill

Strategy Ten
Parental Involvement

Strategy Eleven
Reflection On Teaching Practices

Structured Sessions

Planning structured sessions is very personal; however, basic elements must be considered in place before students enter the picture.

Theory

The provision of structure and support for children in their learning is essential. The teacher must be aware that children vary in their motivation and will require differing degrees of support and must look out for the signs of increasing disaffection. Effective teachers seek to provide a considerable degree of freedom for pupils *within a well-defined framework. (Active Learning)* She or he should encourage children to plan their own learning *within that framework* designed by the teacher, and should include some time for an audit of which tasks have been achieved and of what has been learned. (Mortimore, et al., p. 268) An excellent model for that framework is provided by Beverley Muir, Topcliff P.S. (see Appendix 2:1).

Practice

Many authors of educational documents toil in their attempt to define a framework or a structure according to a "one plan fits all" picture – a picture of what structure "looks like", of how seats might be arranged, of how children might be grouped. However, the underlying structure that is essential to any and every effective classroom remains evasive. For underlying structure is much more than classroom organization; it is a very personal, well-thought out way of approaching that framework which provides a safe, secure, enriched environment in which children understand expectations, accountability and the value of learning. Those special teachers who are making a difference in the outcome of their students refine and adapt existing structure as student needs change. A well-defined framework is invisible to those who don't know what to look for and blatantly visible to those who do. An example of a well-defined framework is provided in Appendix 2:2.

A Well-Defined Framework:

- Make expectations known clearly on the first day, i.e., that this class is a focus for "learning".
- Focus on learning. Students come to school to learn. They feel good about themselves when they learn and when they can apply learning to their lives in the community. Rejoice and celebrate learning at school!
- Be a quality model for your students as they will imitate you to a surprising degree. Act as you want them to act, speak as you want them to speak. (Charles, 1989)
- Emphasize that you want a classroom that is free from disruptions and that students' help is expected in keeping it friendly and pleasant

Strategy One
Structured Sessions

- Let students know when you are available to talk about their feelings and what prodedure is in place for letting you know a conference is wanted.
- Provide interesting learning programs by emphasizing progress, challenge and variety.
- Show interest in your students' work.
- Restructure difficult work and/or help with it.
- Make sure that every student in your class knows their task. For example, don't just send students to a group to do a task. Give each student a role: one is the reporter, one is the observer, one is the encourager, one is the facilitator.
- Have a method for feedback from students regarding class concerns and individual feedback regarding the program.
- Take charge in your classroom. Don't be afraid to ask for input but still make the final decision. Make it known that there are times when your decisions are made by you, without input, for the benefit of the class.
- Go over clasroom rules, discuss what they mean, explain the consequences, then apply them.
- Be consistent. The rules yesterday are the rules today are the rules tomorrow unless you change them. The rules apply to everyone. Don't be seen as having favorites.
- Allow students to have more responsibility as they earn it.
- Always establish your objectives, tell your students what the objectives are, teach directly to the objectives and share assessments of objectives with students.
- Emphasize that students have choices and that they are accountable for those choices once made.
- Keep basic classroom rules simple, e.g., Use manners, be orderly, don't disturb others, complete assigned tasks.
- Reinforce students in a sincere way when they do well.
- Teach other members of the class how to be positive toward other people and reward those behaviors.

Structured Sessions

- Regularly assess learning and help students maintain the focus. Include teacher assessment, student assessment and peer assessment.
- Go through your day and consider how your students come in, hang up their coats, get their work, go to the washroom, etc., and ask yourself if there is a structure in place for these actions.
- Arrange furniture to allow easy access to instructional areas and to provide clear lines of vision to all parts of the room.
- Place supplies in conveniently accessible locations.
- S eparate special interest areas from work areas so as not to distract students.
- When a different seating arrangement may accomodate learning (e.g., setting up a class in the "House of Commons" to decide class rules), have classroom technicians (helpers) whose job is to help with seating arrangements
- Decide what jobs need to be done regularly in the class and organize a schedule and format for doing those jobs.
- Know what's happening in every area of your class at all times, with all students and communicate that fact to students.
- Don't quit. One step forward, two steps back. Some days, nothing seems to go right but remember you cannot establish a well-defined framework in one or two weeks. If it's worth having, it's worth waiting for.
- Keep your philosophy of learning updated. If you know what you believe in, your structure will reflect that.
- Planning for instructional effectiveness should become a routine part of lesson planning. Behind every good lesson is a combination of well-defined strategies.

26 Strategy Two
Skillful Class Management

> *In order for the environment to be conducive to good, productive and purposeful learning, the teacher, by virtue of skillful management and personal example, trains the class to work this way.*
> *(Mortimore, et al., 1988)*

Theory A number of writers have focused on the difficult task of creating within the classroom, the kind of environment that supports and fosters purposeful activity. Kounin (1970) and Marland (1975), specifically have described ways in which skilled teachers manage the classroom so as to avoid disruption and encourage an atmosphere that leads to effective learning. In conjunction with the good planning that has been outlined, effective teachers focus as much of their classroom talk as possible on work-related matters. (Mortimore, et al., 1988; RISE, 1975) "Effective classrooms are free of distracting noise and movement and are, on the whole, 'places where children are not only working but are happy to work.' Such a work-centred environment may appear to a casual observer, to be the natural order maintained by the teacher. However, this inference is quite wrong. In order for the environment to be conducive to good, productive and purposeful learning, the teacher, by virtue of skillful management and personal example, trains the class to work this way." (Mortimore, et al., 1988)

Practice The planned and unplanned realities of the classroom necessitate a teacher having skills that go beyond those required to manage individual children. These pertain to group management – to what a teacher plans and does that is **aimed at more than one child and that affects more than one child.** (Kounin, 1971) An analysis of real classrooms reveals that there are concrete techniques of managing classrooms that relate to the amount of work involvement and misbehavior in large situations. (Kounin, 1971, 1977) This does not include, however, techniques for children who are severely physically or behaviorally handicapped. It is beyond the realm of the classroom teacher to deal with severe disabilities through good classroom management. Such children require the support of outside agencies as has been recommended in other studies.

The basic premises of good classroom management

(Kounin, 1971, 1977)

1. Such desirable characteristics as "friendliness, patience, love of children and understanding" won't run classrooms.

2. Even the best program requires good management techniques to get children started and moving.

3. Educational objectives won't be achieved if a teacher can't get children involved in the work and keep them from disturbing others.

4. teacher's method of handling the misbehavior of a student influences the other students who are audiences to the event but not themselves targets. This is called the "ripple effect" in discipline.

The specific components of good classroom management

(Kounin, 1971, 1977)

1. programming learning that relates variety with intellectual challenge (see Strategies One and Nine).

2. withitness and overlapping
   - demonstrating knowledgeability of what was going on regarding children's behavior
   - attending to more than one issue simultaneously

3. movement management

4. maintaining group focus

5. group alerting

6. student accountability

Components 2–5 are explicated in Appendix 2:6

28 Strategy Three
Content Emphasis

> ***"Student achievement can be improved** when direct and appropriate reading instruction occurs in meaningful content area contexts."* ***(Anne Elliott, 1989)***

Theory One major dimension of classroom climate which is directly related to of the instructional procedures and principles emphasized in this paper is that of content emphasis. *Academic orientation* or *content emphasis* refers to the focus given in a classroom to academic activities, that is, classrooms in which most activities are centred around the accomplishment of academic objectives. (Levin et al., 1981) When the instructional emphasis shifts in the junior grades from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*, instruction in the appropriate skills and strategies should also shift.

Practice

Principles and Procedures Leading to Content Emphasis in Classrooms

- teachers establish objectives, communicate these objectives to their students and teach directly to the objectives
- teachers use time allocated for instructional purposes in a way that enables them to spend the least amount of time on nonacademic activities
- teachers organize classroom processes in different ways to ensure an optimal degree of student involvement in academic activities
- teachers emphasize the kinds of activities that students are encouraged to be engaged in outside classroom periods (e.g., Parent Handbook for junior grades) (Levin, et al. 1981)

Model For Teaching Content Area Reading In the Junior Grades

(adapted from Anne Elliot, 1989).

1. Understand Reasons for Difficulty with Content Texts
2. Direct Instruction Is Needed
3. Specific Vocabulary Must Be Taught
4. Reading Needs A Purpose
5. Visual Images Necessary
6. Helping Students Locate Materials
7. Skimming and Scanning Are Important Skills
8. Graphics A Special Skill
9. Systematic Study Skills

See explication in Appendix 2:7.

Focusing

> *"It appears then that many experienced and extremely skillful teachers , whose norma! practice has been to limit the curriculum focus of their lessons, now have the research evidence which substantiates their regular classroom practices."* *(Mortimore, et al., I988)*

Theory

In recent years, teachers in many boards have been encouraged to organize their classes so that groups of pupils can work at different areas of the curriculum simultaneously. This trend away from whole class teaching represents a turning away from a stultifying approach historically used in most classrooms which assumed that the teacher role in the classroom was to lecture and the student role was to listen. In addition, it recognizes evidence of different learning styles as well as individual needs of students. However, recent research findings point to the problems inherent in the attempt to organize too many different learning experiences within any one classroom. (Mortimore, et al., I988, p. 270) The authors in *"School Matters,"* found that in those classrooms where this was the dominant organizational mode, the teacher's attention tended to be upon management rather than teaching, so opportunities for the kind of intellectually challenging teaching that is discussed later arose too rarely and consequently resulted in poorer teaching and learning. It appears then that *many experienced and extremely skilful teachers, whose normal practice has been to limit the curriculum focus of their lessons*, now have the research evidence which substantiates their regular classroom practices. (Mortimore, et al., I988)

Practice

- Limit the number of learning centres in operation at one time.
- Introduce new activities on a rotational basis.
- Limit the number of curriculum areas to one, possibly two (if you can manage it) at one time.
- Don't expect students to know what to focus on unless you have told them.
- Integrate co-operative learning strategies gradually.
- It is a premise of board documents *("Active Learning", "Look Hear", "Nine Through Twelve")* that the teacher understands the need to focus on lesson objectives.

Strategy Five
Assessment and Record Keeping

> *"You can't plan for effective instruction until you know where the students are, where you want them to go and how you want them to get there."* (Shalaway, 1989)

Theory Evaluation is the systematic collection of evidence to determine whether, in fact, certain changes are taking place in the learners as well as to determine the amount or degree of change in individual students. Properly used, evaluation should enable teachers to make marked improvements in their students' learning. It is this improvement in students' learning which is the central concern of this paper. Effective evaluation or assessment involves much more than giving paper and pencil tests and assigning letter grades. **The process occurs before, during and after lessons, units and marking periods.** It is a way of charting students' progress and is used as a method of appraising the students' **and the teacher's** learning direction. Assessment is the vehicle for instructional planning. You can't plan for effective instruction until you **know where the students are, where you want them to go and how you want them to get there.** (Shalaway, 1989)

Practice

Appropriate Principles of Evaluation

1. Educational decisions will generally be based on the results of the evaluation program.
2. To make such results worth considering, evaluation will be a systematic procedure that both allows the teacher to determine the extent to which instructional objectives are being achieved and gives the teacher insight into the nature of any difficulties being experienced by the students.
3. Evaluation should be a continuous and integral part of the instructional process. An established program of ongoing assessment can identify difficulties quickly and therefore, provide a reasoned basis for immediate action.
4. Evaluation data collection should not be limited to written forms. Students' oral behavior can be important, and teachers' observation and antecdotal record-keeping should be central to the evaluation program.
5. Standardized tests and other objective measures should not generally be used as the major source for decisions about an individual student. Informed judgement implies a variety of assessment measures.
6. To maximize the effectiveness and consequence of an evaluation program, its results must be communicated effectively. Students and parents should also be involved in the evaluation process.

(Shapiro, Lukasevich, and Shapiro, 1986)

Model for Evaluation (adapted from Linda Shalaway, 1989). This model is explicated in Appendix 2:8.

1. **Determine a destination.**
2. **What skills and abilities do the students bring to your class? Gather baseline data.** (see *Alternative Techniques for Evaluating Reading in the Classroom.)*
3. **Chart the direction.**
4. **Are you there yet?**

The most consistent finding in the majority of studies on school effectiveness has been this "crucial connection" between expectations and achievement. (Gage, 1984) Good teachers not only motivate their students, organize the class, clarify the material, and provide illuminating generalizations, but they also project a "vision of excellence". (Cahn) Their expectations more often than not become self-fulfilling prophecies. (Mortimore, et al., 1988)

High Expectations

Theory

Research findings demonstrate that, for some teachers at least, the expectations they have for their pupils can influence the childrens' future academic performance and self-perception. (Pilling and Kelmer Pringle, 1978; and Meyer, 1982) For example, as it relates to one aspect of Age Appropriate Placement, it has been shown that the attainment of younger pupils within a year group was generally poorer than that of their older peers, although there was no difference in their progress in cognitive skills. (Pidgeon, 1970) The most consistent finding in the majority of studies on school effectiveness has been this "crucial connection" between expectations and achievement. (Gage, 1984) Good teachers not only motivate their students, organize the class, clarify the material, and provide illuminating generalizations, but they also project a "vision of excellence". (Cahn) Their expectations more often than not become self-fulfilling prophecies. (Mortimore, et al., 1988)

Practice

Research has documented actions which the teacher can take to **communicate higher expectations, encourage better performance, and increase all students' opportunities to learn.** (adapted from Shalaway, 1989).

1. Be aware of the important role of feedback-corrective procedures. See Appendix 2:10.
2. Ask yourself whether you are judging a student's ability based on reports from previous years, others' opinions or a lack of understanding of cultural differences.
2. Consciously try to call on every student. Evaluate your communication patterns (see Strategy 11: Reflection on Teaching Practices).
4. Give students at least five seconds to respond.
5. Rephrase questions or give clues to help a child respond.
6. React positively to students' answers, either affirming them or correcting them.
7. When students speak, make eye contact and actively listen to what they say.
8. Try to give all students similar opportunities for success.
9. Downplay ability grouping by grouping students differently for various activities. For example, use age, height, likes, dislikes, or alphabetical groupings for activities where ability differences are unimportant.
10. Offer feedback that is sincere and specific.
11. Be aware that some students don't ask for help even when they need it. Offer alternatives, i.e., ask them privately if they would like some help, i.e., leave a mailbox on your desk for private notes to you.
12. Model the respect and courtesy you expect students to return to you.
13. Show an interest in student interests and give them value.

Strategy Seven
Creating a Positive Learning Environment in the Class

As reported in the study "School Matters", children can still change their view of themselves as good or poor learners most easily between the ages of 7 and 11. Therefore, it is important that teachers contribute to a student's self-concept profile in a positive way.

Theory A number of studies have pointed to the importance of the teacher's role in creating a positive atmosphere in the class. It is reported in *School Matters* that time spent on praise or neutral feedback about behavior was related to positive learning effects in the classroom.. Teachers play critical roles; consciously or unconsciously, in influencing students' attitudes about themselves, classmates and schoolwork. (Shalaway, 1989) Students' learning is enhanced when they are in an environment that welcomes them and makes them feel that they are an important part of the group, that expects responsibilty and participation and that rewards successes. Appropriate use of praise, sensitivity to differences in culture and gender, and bonding are necessary to the sense of teamwork and co-operation that are integral to a positive learning environment. Bonding is the important process that binds students to a group and makes them feel valuable to themselves and others. It is essential to mental health and is a cornerstone of self-discipline. Such a conviction must be gained in childhood; it is extremely difficult to acquire it during adulthood. Teachers play an important part in children's formative development, including their mental health. The message is clear that youngsters need to hear, "I am a valuable person." (Wilson, 1986)

Practice

1. **Model the behavior you expect the students to display.** If you want an atmosphere of mutual respect in your classroom, offer it.
2. **Be true to your nature.** A positive atmosphere for one teacher looks different from class to class. While for one teacher, it might be a bubbly good morning to every student, another teacher may just smile acknowledgement while yet another teacher might reward students for getting right to work.
3. **Let the students know that they have a role to play in maintaining conditions conducive to teaching and learning.**
4. **Encourage student talents and teach students how to encourage each other.**
5. **Make it understood that everyone in the class is important.**
6. **Use every appropriate opportunity to foster an appreciation for learning.**
7. **Listen to speakers with your full attention.**
8. **Don't be cutting or sarcastic with children.** First of all, they usually don't understand it and often it hurts their feelings even though they don't know why.
9. **Let students know when they can speak to you privately if/when they need privacy to discuss a matter.**
10. **Give messages in as many ways as possible that people are capable of changing.** Encourage your students to see themselves as "good learners".

Creating a Positive Learning Environment in the Class

Guidelines for Creating A Sense of Gender and Cultural Sensitivity

1. **Have a welcoming process in place for all students who are new to the class.** This might be in the form of a Committee who take on this role for the term but all members of the class should take part in establishing principles for the committee.

2. **Let students know that you are glad they came to your class.** Realize the importance of this attitude, particularly for the student who has just arrived from another country and has not bonded with anyone from this country.

3. **Plan lessons and teach to the concepts of stereotypes, racism and multiculturalism.** You may reinforce concepts thruoughout the year but it is important to teach directly to these issues.

4. **Familiarize students with The Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Keep it posted. Make students aware that it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of gender, colour and religion.**

5. **Teach co-operative behaviors.** Don't assume that everyone knows how to encourage, for example. Set up activites through which students can establish principles of co-operation and practice these behaviors that model them.

6. **Incorporate information from the Canadian mosaic regularly.** For example, hang up a flag from a province or country, count to ten in another language, learn one tradition different from that of your own family, find a new country on a map.

7. **When communicating with families speaking languages other than English, consider time and comfort factors and proceed from there.**

a) allow at least twice the regular time allotted for interviews to allow for interpreters to translate
b) state the positive and recognize successes
c) be clear in your message to the parents
d) try to gain some understanding of cultural expectations from your ESL teacher and incorporate this understanding in dealing with family members.

8. **Assign class "helper jobs" to every student and monitor their completion.**

10. **Avoid grouping on the basis of gender or race.**

11. **Encourage boys and girls to participate in non-traditional activities.**

12. **Be familiar with guidelines for effective praise (see Appendix 2:11).**

34 Strategy Eight
Instructional Clues To Improve Class Involvement

> *"There is a striking convergence of evidence that points to the role of **'time on task'** in improving performance in school subject matters." (Levin, et al., 1981)*

Theory The terms "active learning time" or "engaged learning time" refer to **"a measure of student involvement in class which is considered to be essential and vital to instruction."** (Levin, et al., 1981) Although students may spend equal amounts of time in class, they **vary greatly in their involvement.** (Boydell, 1975; Dennison, 1976; Tibly, et al., 1977; Gump, 1971) There is a striking convergence of evidence that points to the role of **"time on task"** in improving performance in school subject matters. (Levin, et al., 1981) Effective teachers are aware that this active involvement in classroom learning is necessary for effective learning and achieving desired outcomes. Thus, the art of good teaching comprehends all of the means by which a teacher sustains the attention of her/his class.

Practice

Instructional Cues to Increase Time On Task

(adapted from Levin, et al., 1981)

See Appendix 2:9 for explication of this model.

1. **Increase the variety of cues.**
2. **Adapt cues to class needs**
3. **Provide direct interaction with the learning materials *and* the teacher.**
4. **Clearly organize instructional materials.**
5. **Supervise instructional groups to produce a higher degree of involvement.**
6. **Start with what the students already know about the topic.**
7. **Use adequate and clear instructions.**
8. **Link cognitive content to interests of the students to promote more learning.**
9. **Identify and help the least involved students first.**

> *"Thinking skills cannot be used until they are mastered and until they are mastered, it is useless to think that they will be used in the curriculum or in life."* *(Torrance, 1988)*

Teaching Thinking as a Basic Skill

Theory

A major task of teachers is to teach in a way which challenges and stimulates. Other aspects of classroom practice – maintenance of order, organization of books and learning activities, profitable use of time – all provide the teacher with opportunities to challenge and develop the minds of pupils. The skilled practitioner has developed ways to provide this kind of teaching *by asking thought-provoking questions at the right moment, posing problems* and or challenging preconceptions. *There is no doubt that the quality of the discourse in the classroom is one of the most important distinguishing features of effective teaching. (Mortimore, et al., 1988, p. 269)*
"Training in critical thinking should not be the privilege of the selected minority or the luxury of the upper class. It should be the right of every student." (Sternberg, 1983)

Practice

What Teachers Can Do To Encourage The Use of Critical Thinking Skills in the Class

1. **Become familiar with basic premises of thinking skills, creative problem-solving skills, and logic skills (see Appendix 2:3).**

2. **Be a good role-model.** Model the use of critical thinking skills whenever the opportunity presents itself.

3. **Contact your family Program Leader for information about problem-solving, logic and critical thinking materials available to you on loan.** It is beyond the scope of this paper to list the numerous materials available for use by classroom teachers.

4. **Introduce a "Problem of the Week" each week for students,** individually, in pairs, or in groups to solve. Include challenges at all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

5. **Take advantage of opportunities to offer creative solutions to everyday problems.** Brainstorm solutions together or in small groups. The goal is to come up with as many solutions as possible, not the "one best way".

6. **Offer many opportunities to practice logic puzzles,** e.g., bell work, a five minute interval between lessons, or as a fun activity. The possibilities are endless.

7. **Challenge all of your students!** Through infusing thinking skills into one's curriculum, at least three benefits for students come to mind :
   (1) students will process subject matter in a more critical, analytical and thorough manner
   (2) students will become more flexible and creative in their thinking
   (3) students will develop skills that help them adapt to and excel in a changing work environment.
   (Interface, March, 1990)

8. **Other strategies to develop thinking that can be employed in any subject area include :**
   (1) APC – list Alternatives, Possibilities and Choices
   (2) CAF – Consider All Factors
   (3) C&S – Consider Consequences and Sequels
   (4) EBS – Examine Both Sides
   (5) ADI – Agreement, Disagreement and Irrelevance
   (6) TEC – Task (focus phase), Expand (open-up phase), Conclude (narrow phase)
   (7) PMI – Pluses, Minuses, Interests
   (8) Lazy Thinker Vs. Critical Thinker – examine curriculum to determine its nature of thinking.
   (Interface, 1990)

Teaching Thinking as a Basic Skill

Guidelines for Questioning

- **Be familiar with salient research findings on Questioning (see Appendix 2:4).**
- **Be aware that a question which calls for yes or no answer usually discourages discussion.** For example, "Did Mary go to the zoo?" could be rephrased "Why did Mary go to the zoo?"
- **The skillful leader directs questions to the entire class, hesitates, then calls the name of a selected respondent.**
- **A desirable pattern in a questioning session might be teacher question – student response, student question, student response...**This gets away from the pattern of teacher question, student response, teacher question, student response...
- **Use the "Tell Me Format"** (Cheryl Paige, 1989). After listening to a story, students are asked to discuss their likes, dislikes, patterns and puzzles (see Appendix 2:5).
- **Keep in mind that *recall items alone* offer no assurance of critical thinking.**
- **Increase wait time for students to think about their answer to questions.** Most teachers wait time is measured in hundredths of a second. Research literature reports that increasing thinking time to 3 seconds meaningfully improves student responses. Students, like adults, appreciate time to rehearse their answer before being asked to respond. (Bennett, et al., 1989)
- **Become knowledgeable about what kinds of questions you are asking and consequently, be able to use questions to enhance student learning.** For example, understand Bloom's Taxonomy and be able to refer to it when videotaping or recording interactions in the classroom.
- **Model how you use questions and self-questioning techniques to enhance your own learning.** Teacher modelling is very significant for student learning. If the teacher models it, as many teachers do, students will be able to add this technique to their own repertoire.
- **Devote a minimum of one third of your time to questions above the memory or recall level.** This is only a general rule of thumb but is a good starting point for teachers who are looking for guidelines.
- **Remember that critical thinking takes time.** Allow more time for more complex questions to allow students to formulate their answers in their heads.
- **Foster a psychological climate in the classroom which encourages students not to be afraid of consequences of "wrong answers."** The teacher can handle incorrect responses without making the children feel stupid. For example, the teacher could probe for further information by asking the same pupil a series of questions leading toward clarification (Hollingsworth, 1982).
- **Learn how to handle individual differences in a questioning session.** (Hollingsworth) The teacher can direct different levels of questions on the same topic in a way which will keep all students interested.
- **Encourage students to question themselves.**

Parental Involvement

"For very many years we have known, both from well-established research findings as well as from common sense, that parental commitment is a cornerstone of school success. If parents are interested in their childrens" schooling, if they are supportive of the school's endeavours, if they act in partnership with teachers, then the children will achieve more in school." (Hargreaves, 1984, p. 14)

Theory

Numerous studies have been conducted which suggest that parental involvement is an influential aspect of school effectiveness (Armor et. al., 1976, Hewison and Tizard, 1980, Mortimore and Mortimore, 1984, Hargreaves, 1984, Thomas, 1985). The key here is the reference to effective *schools*. In other words, the school must provide a supportive framework that furthers mutual confidence between the school and the parents at all times. With such a supportive framework in place, then there are many actions that the classroom teacher can take to foster positive parent-teacher partnerships defined as **"the continuity between the home and the school."**

There are many teachers in North York who have made a concerted effort to provide this continuity through communication about the activities and happenings in the classroom. These same teachers have also been successful in having parent substitutes - that valuable resource of grandparents - in their classrooms to offer their expertise in working successfully with children. In North York, a successful project at Flemington Elementary School called "Booktime" (Madge Logan, Cheryl Paige) is proving that the provision of a parent handbook regarding reading to children at home results in raising students" reading scores.

Practice

Model is further explicated in Appendix 2:13

1. Cultivate parents built-in capability to accomplish more when they work together with the teacher rather than separately.

2. Ask for parent input. Parents and only parents are able to to shed light on the non-academic, non-school oriented side of their child.

3. Prepare handouts which can be sent out to parents on a regular basis sharing the latest news.

4. Acknowledge the changes in the nuclear family.

5. Tailor communications to your audience.

6. Good listening skills are essential in home-school relations.

7. If there is an expectation for something you want students to do at home on a regular basis, give the parents clear directions of why they are doing it, what exactly you want them to do and how they play an important role.

8. Ensure that work at home or homework is not a source of agony for both parents and students.

9. Take advantage of all opportunities to make parents feel welcome and assure them that they can support their children at home.

10. Ask parents to share their talents in the classroom and use this as an opportunity to build the home-school connection.

11. Accord the same respect to parents that you would like to receive.

12. Become knowledgeable about the cultural make-up of your school and try to incorporate this knowledge when communicating to encourage parents to feel welcome in the school.

(adapted from Shalaway, 1981)

Strategy Eleven
Reflection on Teaching Practices

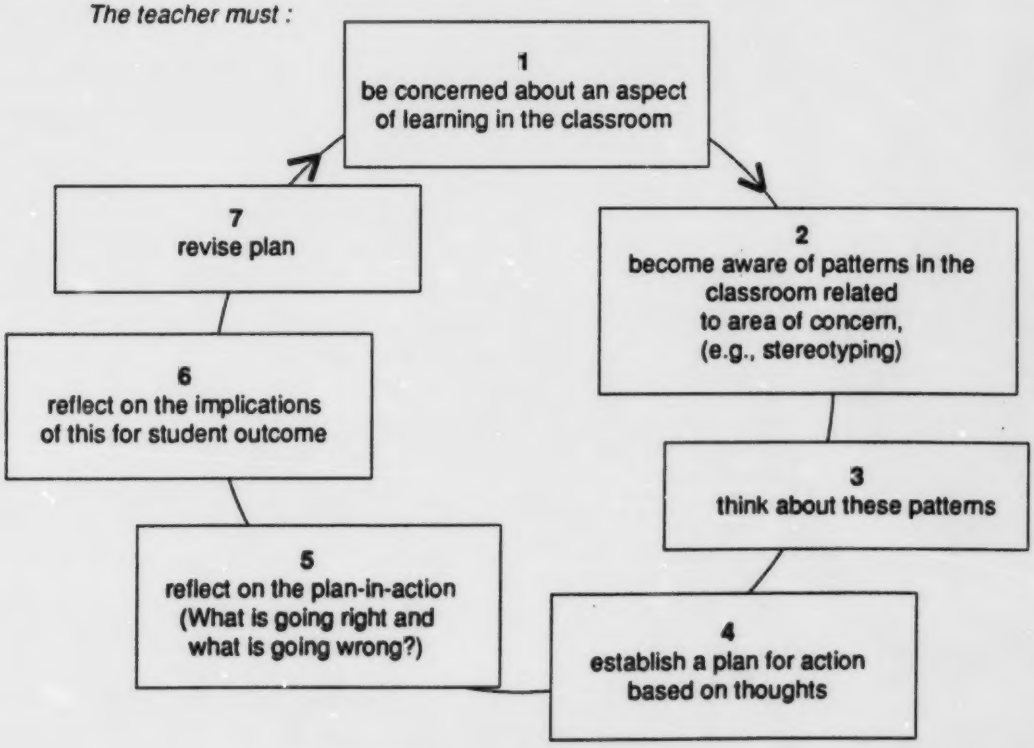
For it is only professional development that is meaningful to the teacher that will occur.

Theory In the past, professional development for teachers has not resulted in that crucial practice of reflection that leads to change. In order for change to occur, **action must be preceded by thought and followed by reflection.** (Lezotte, 1988) Most school boards follow the pattern of action, action and more action. The finding on maximum communication between teachers and pupils (School Matters, 1989) infers that in order for communication patterns to improve, teachers would have to become researchers or "learners" in their own classrooms; thinking about communication, acting on communication patterns and reflecting on results or as Larry Lezotte (1989) describes it, *walking the deck – "talking about what is going right, what is going wrong in the classroom.*

Practice 1. **Opportunities for Reflection** Through North York's *Supervision for Growth Program* (see Appendix 2:12):

2. **A Cycle to Enhance Teacher Reflection**

The teacher must :


1
be concerned about an aspect of learning in the classroom
2
become aware of patterns in the classroom related to area of concern, (e.g., stereotyping)
3
think about these patterns
4
establish a plan for action based on thoughts
5
reflect on the plan-in-action (What is going right and what is going wrong?)
6
reflect on the implications of this for student outcome
7
revise plan

3. **Teachers acting as researchers** in their own classrooms according to their own model.

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PART THREE

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

"Effective educational change in practice cannot occur without the improvements in the teacher's work life."
(Michael Fullan, 1982)

Successful Teaching Practice Is Everybody's Business

Given that educational literature is replete with suggestions for "what" teachers can do to improve learning in classrooms, it has been the concern of the author that *Part Two* could become yet another set of suggestions for "what to do" without considering the many researches which have made it clear that teaching is not just a collection of skills and strategies. Teaching is a professional and moral craft which is driven by purpose. Therefore, essential to the development of strategies for those teachers who choose them as being meaningful to them is the understanding of *educational change, teacher growth and school culture.* The following section briefly summarizes some pertinent research and makes some recommendations based on research. (Samuel Sarason, 1971; Susan Rosenholtz, 1988; Michael Fullan, 1982; Andy Hargreaves, 1988) and findings from confidential interviews with teachers and principals of North York.

About Change

1. **Change is a highly personal experience** – each and every one of the teachers who will be affected by change must have the opportunity to work through this experience in a way in which the rewards at least equal the cost.
2. **Change is a process, not an event.**
3. **Far too many changes are in front of teachers at one time.**
4. **The strategies commonly used by the promoters of change frequently do not work because they are derived from premises different from that of the teacher.**
4. **Teachers' reasons for rejecting many innovations are every bit as rational as those of the advocates promoting them.**

(Michael Fullan, *The Meaning of Educational Change, 1984).*

About Teachers

- teachers can have **important verifiable effects on student achievement**
- teachers in high-consensus schools believe that **teaching is important**
- teachers need to engage in **reflective teaching**
- forward moving schools are enriched by a marked spirit of **continuous improvement** in which no teacher ever stops learning how to teach
- **schools may need to explore different means of promoting individual teacher excellence in ways that not only improve instruction but also inspire community** (i.e., a willingness to help other teachers) because *school context can vary considerably*

(from *Teachers' Workplace*, by Susan Rosenholtz)

Support for Teachers

About Change and the Teacher

- teacher stress and alienation from the profession appear to be at an all time high.
- the quality of working conditions of teachers is fundamentally connected to the chances for success in change.
- teachers must have some understanding of the operational meaning of "the change" before they can make a judgement about it.
- the culture of the school, the demands of the classroom, and the usual way in which change is introduced do not permit, point to, or facilitate teacher involvement in exploring or developing more significant changes in educational practice.
- how change is introduced will increase or decrease the degree to which school improvement is realized for the *majority* of teachers involved.

(Michael Fullan, *The Meaning of Educational Change, 1984)*

Why Change Efforts Have Not Worked

Those introducing change have not been sensitive to where teachers are and why. Proponents of change prefer to take the more direct and rational route: **telling the teachers what is the right way to act and think.** In short, *"Those who want change do exactly that for which they critisize teachers.* (Sarason, 1971, p. 193) Such a change process is simply not conducive to increasing teachers' skills, excitement or interest in the value of change.

The degree of change is strongly related to the extent to which teachers interact with each other and others providing technical help. (Fullan, 1988; Rosenholtz, 1988; Hargreaves, 1989)

(Michael Fullan, *The Meaning of Educational Change*, 1984)

Recommendations
To Enhance The use of Effective Teaching Strategies
To Positively Affect Student Outcome

"People are the ultimate source of renewal ." (Robert Waterman) *Teachers are those people.*

1. **Investigate issues of teacher satisfaction and teacher recognition in the workplace.**
2. **Recognize findings that teacher morale is directly linked to learning in the classroom.**
3. **A focused effort is needed to recognize the importance of teachers and of teaching.**
4. **Teachers must be allowed time to think about effective teaching within the realm of effective schools.** Enable all educators in to be articulate about effective schools. If you're going to be part of an effective school, everyone on board must have a vision of where they are going. Teachers must see themselves as "part of the solution" toward better education.

continued

Recommendations
To Enhance The use of Effective Teaching Strategies
To Positively Affect Student Outcome
(continued)

5. **School plans must be established which include all teachers on staff.** This will involve lots of dialoguing, lots of discussion, lots of expression of ideas and even argumentation. Only after this thought is firmly established can the action begin.

6. **Schools must provide opportunities for reflection. This is the time when the community of co-equals reflects back to one another in a non-threatening atmosphere.** Staffs must feel free to talk about what went right and what went wrong as a team. The absence of this valuable reflection is an open invitation to teachers to do again next year what they did last year even if it's not working (Lezotte, 1988).

7. **Schools must focus their efforts through *organized abandonment.*** In order to achieve excellence in the focused area, schools must answer the important question, "What goes and what stays?" Don't change the focus in an attempt to satisfy too many initiatives at the same time.

8. **Continue affiliations with higher level educational institutions.** This affiliation enhances the collegiality of teachers and inculcates teachers in a professional culture of teaching.

9. **Continue to examine the role of Program Leaders in the system.** It is crucial to recognize the important contribution of *teacher* collegiality and *teacher* collaboration to *increased student achievement.* Following that train of thought, professional development intended for staff must be meaningful to the staff.

10. **Encourage a sense of commitment to discuss educational issues in schools.** For example, principals could allow all teachers the opportunity to report to staff about learning and teaching, e.g., two teachers per meeting, 10 minutes each about some area of their program which they would like to feature.

11. **While it is recognized that teacher collegiality and teacher collaboration will lead to improved student learning and achievement, this is an attitude that must be fostered over a period of time. It cannot be mandated** When collaborative norms undergrid achievement-oriented groups, they bring new ideas, fresh ways of looking at things, and a stock of collective knowledge that is more fruitful than any one person's working alone. (Rosenholtz, 1989) An *evolving* school culture then could answer the needs of schools as they become apparent.

12. **Provide resources for teachers' professional development according to their staff or their S for G goals.** Allow teachers to have the opportunity to report back to staff on conferences and their own learning which may benefit others. This takes into account the important professional development of teacher-teacher influence.

Recommendations
To Enhance The use of Effective Teaching Strategies
To Positively Affect Student Outcome
(continued)

13. **Plan to allow teachers better access to the tools of their trade** – such as access to computers and telephones, business cards and PROFS messages. The display of teacher certificates may also enhance the professionalization of the teaching culture.

14. **Adopt a motto *"Teachers Learn What They Live"***

If teachers live with a lack of focus in their schools,
They learn to focus according to their own individual goals.
If teachers live with criticism for every mistake they make,
They learn to hide their mistakes.
If teachers live without support for them in the workplace,
They learn that teaching is a very lonely profession.
If teachers live with the attitude that teachers are not important,
Then they learn that teaching students is not important.

If teachers live with focused organizational goals,
They learn to have focus in their schools.
If teachers live with the knowledge that reflection is valuable,
They learn to reflect on their teaching practice.
If teachers live with the notion that they are part of a collaborative team,
They learn to collaborate for success.
If teachers learn that what they are doing is important -
They learn to value the importance of teaching.

And then teachers teach students what they have learned.

(adapted from "Children learn . . ."

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Conclusion

The conclusions that can be drawn from this document concern support strategies for all age appropriately placed students from three perspectives: firstly, it examines the process of age appropriate placement as it is currently practiced in North York and makes recommendations to refine the process. If these recommendations are acted upon, then age appropriate placement will become a thoughtful, planned individualized practice. Secondly, it relates the research findings from studies concerning effective teaching practices to effective strategies as teachers from North York have described them to the author. Thus, it has become a collection of views of researchers and North York educators alike that serve to demonstrate specific, definitive strategies that can be directly related to improved achievement and improved student outcome in the regular classroom. Thirdly, it points to the significance of the importance of teachers and the importance of teaching and to the inextricable link that exists between effective teaching practices and teacher recognition and satisfaction.

This paper began by examining the practice of Age Appropriate Placement and concluded that for most students, this is a sound educational practice. A strong statement is also made indicating that age appropriate placement must be a thoughtful, planned, individualized process if it is to present the opportunity for students to succeed. The recommendations for exceptional placements attempt to offer a framework within which these exceptions are best served. Following that line of thought, this paper points to the fact that placement only will not obviate ineffective performance. While recommendations for the refinement of the placement procedure itself are the genesis for improved student outcome , the question which still begged to be answered was "What support strategies can the regular classroom teacher use to enhance the learning of all age appropriately placed students once placement has been determined?"

In response to that question, the author then reflected on the recurring theme of current school reform which calls for the enhancement of teaching as a profession; for serious reflection and critical analysis by teachers about the meaning and scope of their work. (Rosenholtz, 1989) As a consequence of this reflection and a great deal of inquiry into the practice of teaching, this paper posited that there are specific strategies that teachers in effective classrooms use to enhance the learning of all age appropriately placed students. Not surprisingly, a parallel was evident between the strategies which research indicated led to improved student achievement and the strategies that teachers were using in the classroom to improve student achievement. Thus, it was the major undertaking of this project to demonstrate the link between the theory and the practice of effective teaching. *Effective Teaching Strategies* then, outlines the research findings which link the successful use of these strategies with the lock-step procedure of " how-to-do-it". The strategies are as follows :

1. Planning Structured Sessions
2. Skillful Classroom Management
3. Content Emphasis
4. Focusing
5. Assessment and Record Keeping
6. High Expectations
7. Creating A Positive Learning Environment in the Class
8. Instructional Cues to Increase Time On Task
9. Teaching Thinking As A Basic Skill
10. Parental Involvement
11. Reflection On Teaching Practices

While the review of research studies on teacher behaviour and pupil achievement has come to the conclusion that no single teacher behaviour has any significant effect on student outcomes, when clusters of behaviours are put together in certain describable sets of activities, there does seem to be relationship. (RISE, 1982)

continued

48 Conclusion

Lastly, but certainly not least important, this paper looked at the inextricable link between the successful use of these strategies and the importance of teachers being satisfied and recognized in the workplace. Crucial to the understanding of the enhancement of teaching is the understanding that the workplace conditions that enhance teachers' learning opportunities, their psychic rewards, their freedom from uncertainty and their commitment to the profession is paramount in creating a compelling rationale for well-conceived changes. (Rosenholtz, 1989) Therefore, some recommendations are offered which reflect the importance of investigating the creation of a professional teacher culture. This has obvious implications for further studies into the recognition and satisfaction of administrators.

The strength of this document lies in the fact that The Board of Education for the City of North York has been concerned enough about the practice of age appropriate placement to have a classroom teacher investigate the practice and offer the results of the findings as support strategies that are viable, practical and promising. While the presentation of this discourse has left many questions unanswered and is briefly formulated in light of the scope of this project, the aim of this document has been to demonstrate the possibility for a vision of what specific support strategies may make the achievement of age appropriately placed students in North York better by enhancing teacher effectiveness. This document has the possibility to do more than remove one fly from that sticky web of educational theory and educational practice. It offers the opportunity to refine a practice that is sound in its philosophy. It offers the opportunity to create more effective classrooms through the recognition of effective teaching strategies and of what teachers are doing right in the classroom. And finally, it offers the opportunity to rethink the philosophy of "partners in education" for real educational benefit – that is, the higher achievement and improved student outcome for all age appropriately placed students.

APPENDICES

50 Appendix 1:1 Research for this Document

During the course of research for this paper, many avenues of information were explored. Much of the material illustrated in this paper results from:

(I) confidential conversations with numerous North York teachers , support staff and administrators about concerns surrounding AAP
(2) from the author's personal experience as a teacher
(3) from the author's attendance at learning conferences
(4) the investigation of programs in the three other boards offering age appropriate placement
(5) from an *intensive* review of educational literature.
(6) investigating programs of accelerated learning used specifically to place over-aged students with their same aged peers
(7) investigation of programs that were recommended as best being able to serve students whr were placed with their peer group but may have been considered as candidates for grade retention in other systems.

Note : A.A.P. = Age Appropiate Placement

PRINCIPAL SURVEY

PANEL : Elementary _____

Intermediate _____

Secondary _____

1. Was A.A.P. was first implemented in your school, was it seen as a policy statement or a preferred statement ?

_____

_____

_____

2. What have you seen working well since students have been age appropiately placed ?

_____

_____

_____

3. What concerns do you have about the A.A.P. student ?

_____

_____

_____

4. What concerns are most often expressed by staff about A.A.P.?

_____

_____

_____

5. What concerns are most often expressed by the community about A.A.P.?

_____

_____

_____

6. What A.A.P. students are you most concerned about ? Please elaborate.

_____

_____

_____

7. What kinds of support do A.A.P. students require to succeed ? What resources do you as a principal need to provide this support?

_____

_____

_____

8. Is there any modification to the policy which you think might enhance its implementation?

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you see a need for a teacher resource to specifically support A.A.P. students ? Yes____ No _____

Please elaborate :

_____

_____

_____

10. Workshops were offered to principals in the Western Region at the time of introduction of A.A.P. explaining its rationale. Did you attend these workshops ? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, did you find them :

interesting? ___ helpful?____ crucial to implementation? _____

11. Which kind of child is the most difficult to program for the classroom teachers to program for ?

_____

_____

_____

12. What support strategies would you like to see in place for the A.A.P. student ? (check as many as you wish)

Team Programming _____

Summer School _____

Intervention Classes _____

Accelerated Classes _____

Homework _____

Increases Parental Involvement _____

Regular reviews of A.A.P. students _____

Support / Resource Teachers _____

Private Tutoring _____

Team Teaching with a specialist _____

Other :

_____

_____

_____

Would you please return to KARYN WRIGHT-SIKORA , at Lamberton Centre the names, addresses and language of three families who have had their child age appropiately placed ? This will enable Mrs Wright - Sikora to include them in her survey of opinions. Thank - you .

1. Family Name : _____

Address :

_____

_____

_____

Language of choice for written communication : _____

2. Family Name : _____

Address :

_____

_____

_____

Language of choice for written communication : _____

3. Family Name : _____

Address :

_____

_____

_____

Language of choice for written communication : _____

Note: A.A.P. = Age Appropiate Placement

TEACHER SURVEY

Panel: Elementary: Primary ___ Junior ____

Intermediate ____

Secondary _____

Number of A.A.P. Students taught:

under 5_____ more than 5 ____ don't know _____

Description of Students:

* average but E.S.L./D component (i.e. disrupted schooling)_____
* low - achieving but placed in next grade_____
* advanced 2 grades in one year_____
* don't know_____

1. What is your understanding of what is meant by :Appropiate Placement ?

_____

_____

_____

2. Do you know the month of birth of students in your class / classes?

Always___ Usually ____ Sometimes _____ Never _____

3. Do you think this information is important ?

Very Important___ Somewhat Important___ Not important____

4. Do you feel that A.A.P. has been implemented as an unquestioned policy or as a Preferred Statement? Please elaborate.

_____

_____

_____

5. How do you feel aboutthe implementation of A.A.P. ?

fully supportive___ supportive in most cases___ not supportive____

Please elaborate

:_____

_____

_____

6. What support strategies are offered to students in your school who are Age Appropiately Placed ?

_____

_____

_____

7. How do you think parents in your community feel about A.A.P.?

_____

_____

_____

8. What do you think the students understand by A.A.P.?

_____

_____

_____9

9. What sort of support strategies do you feel will work for A.A.P. students? (check as many as you wish)

Team Programming___

Summer School_____

Intervention Classes____

Accelerated Classes (i.e. Grade 4/5 in one year)_____

Homework_____

Increased parental involvement_____

Regular reviews of A.A.P. students_____

Support / Resource Teachers _____

Private Tutoring_____

Team Teaching with a specialist_____

Other:_____

_____

10. a) What percentage of students in your class who are placed according to age do not meet your grade expectations?

Less than 10%-___ 10 - 24% _____ 25% +_____

b) What role do high expectations play in relation to these students?

_____

_____

_____

11. The A.A.P. Policy states that specific program modifications clearly aimed at weak learning skills are offered to the A.A.P. student. Which kind of student are you having the most difficulty programming for ?

_____

_____

_____

12.) What do YOU need to better support the A.A.P. student ?

_____

_____

_____

THANKS AGAIN !

Fri. Nov. 10, 1990
Lamberton Centre
33 Lamberton Blvd.
North York, Ont.
M3J 1G6

80 Sheppard Ave. East
Willowdale, Ont.
M2N 6E8

Dear Dr. Barone,

I am writing regarding your practice of placing students according to age. I am presently working on a Special Project for the North York Board of Education to develop support strategies for Age Appropiately Placed Students. As you probably know, our board also places students according to age. In my research, I have become aware that your board, and the Windsor Catholic Board are the only two boards in Canada who officially have such a policy and are in the process of implementing it. It is written in the Canadian Information Note (March, 1989) :

" That board's (MSSB) schools, together with the regional directors, have set up policies and guidelines to modify a student's programs so that a student can stay with his companions of the same age and to allow the school to respond to his or her learning needs. "

It is regarding these policies and guidelines specifically that I am asking for your direction. I have called your board several times and spoken with various people from Special Services, Admissions and Placement, Public Relations and Program Design, however I have received no information about the policy or program modifications that have resulted from it. I would appreciate being put in contact with the appropriate people who could give me more information. Your co-operation in this matter is very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

K. L. Wright - Sikora, Special Projects

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FOR THE
CITY OF NORTH YORK

Appendix 1:2 61

DATE _____

DIRECTION _____

CROSS FILED _____

TO: All Principals of Elementary,
Middle and Junior High Schools,
Western Region

FROM: Superintendent of Schools,
Western Region

DATE: 10 April 1986

CODE:

RE: AGE APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS

Objective:

A major objective of the Western Region is to achieve age appropriate grade placements for all students at the elementary and intermediate levels.

Rationale:

The rationale for this objective has been well documented in educational research over the past fifty years:

1. retention of students with a young age group does not improve academic achievement
2. retention of students with a younger age group has a negative effect on student self-image and behaviour
3. drop-out rates are much higher among overaged students
4. overaged students are significantly less likely to graduate from secondary school.

Reasons for Problem:

The reasons for our high percentage of overaged students include:

1. "Repeating", "continuous promotion" and "non-grading" within North York, particularly in grades one and two.
2. Placement of new admissions, particularly new Canadians, with a younger age group.
3. Admission of students, from other schools and systems, who have already repeated.

Recommended Strategies for Achieving the Objective:

1. Principals will ensure that students do not repeat (i.e. retained in a grade to join a younger age group).

2. Principals will ensure that each student, newly arrived to Ontario, receives appropriate support in the age appropriate grade.

3. Each school will develop appropriate intervention strategies which will ensure that each overaged student will be age appropriately placed within one year of admission to the school.

4. Each school will develop appropriate intervention strategies which will ensure age appropriate placement of all students, who are currently overaged, by September, 1987.

Exceptions:

Exceptions may be made in the best interests of students. Principals will discuss each exception with their Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

Accountability:

Principals and staff are expected to articulate the educational rationale of this policy to each student and parent affected. Research on this issue is available through the Minkler Library. The Assistant Superintendents and I are available to assist you and your staff in developing appropriate intervention strategies.

Student Data:

A summary printout of overaged students in your school is available from your Assistant Superintendent.

R. F. Marner/lb

Recommended Reading (Available from Minkler Library):

"It's Time to Get Tough on Student Promotion -- Or Is It?
M. Scott Norton, (p. 283 - 286), Contemporary Education, Vol. 54, No. 4, Summer 1983

"What Research Says -- About Grade Retention", [illegible] Glenn D. [illegible] and Denise Pinti, [illegible] Middle School Journal, November, 1985, Vol. 17:1

Review of Literature on Retention-Promotion Debate

The two most instructive publications treating the retention/promotion issue are Jackson's 1975 review of 204 studies completed on the topic since 1911 and the more recent metanalysis by Holmes and Matthews in 1983 of 44 major studies completed since 1975. The current wealth of literature on this topic continues to re-affirm much of what these two studies conclude.

In his review, Jackson's (1975) general conclusion was that despite extensive research,

"There is no reliable body of evidence to indicate that grade retention is more beneficial than grade promotion for students with serious academic or adjustment difficulties." (Jackson, 1975, p. 627)

Concerns arise then, as to how a preponderonce of boards quote research to support the return to mastery learning, standardized testing and grade retention. After reviewing 204 studies on this topic, Jackson makes a strong statement that most studies on this topic suffer from flawed mehodology. Put another way, this means that studies that were biased in design to favour grade promotion found support for grade promotion. And that studies that were biased in design to favour grade retention found support for that bias. *Investigations which involve a comparison of randomly promoted or retained students who are experiencing difficulties are the only unbiased design.* Understandably, because of rigorous treatment conditions, schools have been reluctant to assign students randomly to treatment groups of this sort (Johnston, 1985, p. 66). Jackson reported only 3 out of 204 investigations of this type (Cook, 1941, Farley, 1936, Klene and Branson, 1929). Unfortunately, these investigations were all reported over 40 years ago and may be of questionable validity when applied to today's schools (Johnson, 1984, p. 66).

Jackson remains unconvinced of the value of grade retention. The inference of Jackson's intensive review of the literature for educational practice must be that to retain students in grade on the basis of this research would be irresponsible, particularly in light of the the large numbers of students involved. Estimates indicate that in doing so, 40 per cent of all students would fail at some point in their school career.

Holmes and Matthews (1983) also remain unconvinced of the benefits of retention. Upon completing their metanalysis of 44 major studies of retention and promotion, they conclude,

" . . . that nonpromotion had a negative effect on the pupils . . . particularly in the area of language arts, reading and work-study skills " (Holmes and Matthews, 1983).

They are just as convinced of the harmful effects of retention to the student's adjustment as they are that it is harmful to future academic achievement (Johnston, et al., 1985, p. 9).

Appendix 1:4
The Half-Step Program

The half-step program functions in three ways:

1. Most importantly, it offers the overaged student **the opportunity to be as successful as possible academically** by providing input which covers gaps in learning which have been created by missing an entire grade at some earlier point in the student's career. This opportunity for academic equity provides the student with a modified program designed by the teacher which focuses on the basic skills essential for academic success.

2. It allows the student **time** to adjust to a different age group by creating a transition period.

3. It affords the teacher time to **assess** student needs and evaluate program modifications taking into account skill development, academic standing and individual planning ; then to communicate objectives and teach directly to objectives.

4. It affords the principal the time necessary **to plan with the receiving teacher or school** to make the much needed reception and monitoring arrangements which will allow the transtion to be a thoughtful one.

5. It provides a more homogeneous group of learning needs which can be addressed by the teacher.

The practice of placing students from a lower grade, let's say, grade 4, to a higher grade, let's say grade 6, without any intervention strategy such as the half-step program has no basis in research. This practice in past years was called "skipping a grade" and was the process followed by high-achieving students to accelerate their learning. This practice for high-achieving students requires a supportive transition. This sheds light on the practice for any student.

The following creative solution offered at Topcliff P.S. for an exceptional student provides a thoughtful, intended intervention strategy.

The Case of Student X

Student X arrived at Topcliff P.S. from Africa with no previous schooling. The immediate placement of X in Grade One would negate the value of the "much needed" **time** to adjust to a new school, a new culture, new friends etc. and to learn the basic skills taught and learned in both junior and senior kindergarten. (which father described as being very limited). In order that the student have every opporunity possible to gain equity with her age-appropriate peers, an educationally sound intervention strategy was devised which allowed time for the necessary adjustments.

A proposal was discussed with parents, and respective teachers: Student X was to attend school **on a full-time basis** in Kindergarten from September until December while her progress was carefully monitored and support was available to the regular classroom teacher from a support team (See Appendix). In January and regularly from that point on, Student X's progress is to be assessed to determine the next most educationally sound step in the planned intervention procedure.

TOPCLIFF SUPPORT TEAM

1. WHAT IS THE SUPPORT TEAM?

It is a committee whose prime purpose is to support teachers with strategies/materials for students experiencing ongoing difficulty in academic, emotional or behavioural areas. A small percentage of students may be referred for assessment and some of these will be placed in Special Education Programs.

2. WHO IS ON THE SUPPORT TEAM?

Connie Easto	Psychoeducational Consultant	Phone # 395-3587	
Barb Hurst	Speech & Language Teacher	Phone # 395-3654	*Lambert on*
Anne Gomme	Special Educ. Program Leader	Phone # 395-3595	*Centre*
Beverley Muir			

You may wish to have other support personnel present: e.g. ESL, Public Health, Speech Pathologist. Please note this on your referral sheet.

3. WHAT DO THE SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS DO?

The Support Team does get involved in assessing students. Part of that assessment may include formal testing of a child where approval has been given in writing by the parent. The testing may result in a child's name being presented to a **Board Identification Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.)** As a rule, no psychological assessment is done until after the Support Team has discussed the child and program modification has been explored.

4. HOW DO I CONTACT THE SUPPORT TEAM?

Complete one of the attached forms and return to Beverley. As the form indicates, the teacher will need to do some "homework" before presenting the child to the Support Team.

5. WHAT DO I DO IF I AM UNCERTAIN ABOUT PRESENTING A CHILD'S NAME TO THE SUPPORT TEAM?

This is a common question. Do feel free to ask any member of the Support Team to observe the child informally in your class. Based on this and possibly program modification, you will have a better sense about coming to the Support Team.

6. WHEN DOES THE SUPPORT TEAM MEET?

Every other Tuesday in at 11:40 in Beverley's office.
Dates for the fall term are: Oct. 13, 17, 31 Nov. 14, 28 Dec. 12

7. WHEN ARE CONNIE, BARB & ANNE IN THE SCHOOL?

Connie is here every Tuesday all day.
Barb is here every Tuesday 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Anne will be here every Tuesday: Dates are - Oct. 3, 17, 31 Nov. 14, 28 Dec. 12

66 Appendix 2:1 Unit Model

The model proposed by Beverley Muir was chosen for six specific reasons.

1) It is practical for teacher application.
2) It is based on sound educational practice which takes into account the benefits of large group, small group and individual learning.
3) It demonstrates the applicability of direct teaching and peer sharing within a *well-defined framework.*
4) It incorporates the specific skill development which is a necessary focus in junior education, e.g., content reading in social studies
5) It focuses on Social Studies as a medium for learning in the mainstream of language program. (*Report on Elementary Social Studies*, Quality Assurance, 1989).
6) It provides opportunities for creativity and creative problem-solving. It is congruent with that aspect of the creative process which requires a *broad knowledge base* be present.

General Outline of Model

(This can pertain to any unit.)

PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

ONE: TEACHER INPUT

- structured
- 2 weeks of 45 minute lessons to "lay the foundation" or "establish the framework"

(1) meaning of unit
- outline of unit presented to students
- unit topic: who, what, where, when, why ?
- how unit pertains to students
- what is expected from students (evaluation): both self and teacher

(2) Communication with administration and parents

(3) Model skills and strategies necessary for completing the tasks. For example, show students how you would search for information in a printed passage.

(4) Develop skills which will be needed for application in rest of unit

(5) Develop strategies to create a work-centred approach both for individuals and for small groups

(6) Develop framework of a highly participatory active learning setting within the well-defined setting

TWO: INDEPENDENT STUDY

(SMALL GROUP WORK)

- action statements, set expectations and determine what is to be evaluated and build it into classsroom management
- students choose from purposeful activities which they have co-designed with the teacher
- what is expected is reinforced

THREE: CREATIVE PRODUCT

- An Occasion To Apply Skills From Above

STUDENT PLAN

(1) Articulate objectives
(2) Target a particular audience. In this way students a *focus can be placed* on a specific group.
(3) Submit plan in draft form; then conference with teacher. This conference should be organized in such a way that both teacher and student time is focused on task
(4) Do plan in final form.
(5) Presentation to large group is required.

A Well-Defined Framework Is...

A North York Kindergarten Class Having Their Morning Snack

The nineteen senior-kindergarten students activity time is over - how do they know it's over? - Mrs. J. played the little song on the piano *"It's Our Snack Time"*. Without further ado, the children put their activities where they belong - how do they know where they belong? - because Mrs. J. has told the children, demonstrated for the children and positively reinforced the children for putting things back where they belong. The children chat pleasantly together as they go to their "cubbies"to get their snacks. Why are they chatting pleasantly? Because they're sharing, caring friends - that's what everyone in that class knows - that they belong to this special class called Senior Kindergarten and in this class, they are nice people who try their best to get along with their neighbours - they try to talk out their problems even when they don't get along sometimes. Each student brings their unopened snack to the "X" on the rug and sits and waits until all the children are sitting. Mrs. J. has taught them step-by-step how to do this. The children share briefly what they learned this morning about bunnies and their characteristics -Mrs. J. has established objectives, let the students know the objectives, taught directly to the objectives and assessed the objectives. The children share their snacks and during this time various "snack" topics are covered in a fun, enthusiastic and often funny way. For example, they talk about textures of snacks, nutritious snacks, easy-to-wrap snacks, snacks that come in their own packages, light snacks, heavy snacks, similarities of snacks, differences of snacks. This is fun and purposeful sharing itme about snacks. The children then tidy up their snack area and feel satisfied that they have done a good job. They're ready to continue the learning that they came to school to do!

This is one example of how one teacher weaves her own philosophy into planning a well-defined framework. To the naked eye, this may appear to be a group of children who just like school, but as many of the authors on good classroom management would agree, this structure is so inherent in the program because the children have been "trained to work in this way". This teacher will adapt structure according to class needs; however, there is thought and caring behind the operation of this class and while the task will change, the structure will always be there.

Appendix 2:3 Why Teach thinking as a Basic Skill?

Why Teach Thinking As A Basic Skill?

(adapted from Schoenfiels & Rosenblatt, 1988)

- thinking is a mental process that involves **forming patterns; creating mental images and drawing relationships among people, things, and events**
- thinking involves the integration of such mental processes as **observation, naming, classification, seriation and problem-solving.** The co-ordination of these mental processes is the essence of thinking.
- the development of thinking skills **must actively involve the individual** as it forms the foundation of the educational program (Isenberg, et al., 1989)

A Brief Review of *Bloom's Taxonomy* Beginning At The Lowest Level

(A hierarchy of thinking skills based on *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives; Handbook 1; Cognitive Domain,* by Benjamin S. Bloom, 1956)

1. Knowledge: remembering previously learned material by gathering information, recalling, listing and defining. The teacher tells or shows. The student responds, absorbs or remembers.
2. Comprehension: the ability to grasp the meaning of material by showing that you understand through interpreting, explaining, giving examples and converting. The teacher demonstrates, questions, compares or examines. The student identifies, explains, translates and interprets.
3. Application: using learned material in new and concrete situations by using the information to solve problems, construct charts and graphs, modify and demonstrate. The teacher shows, facilitates, observes, and criticizes. The student solves new problems, demonstrates, uses knowledge, constructs and applies.
4. Analysis: the ability to break down or see the parts of materials so that their organization may be understood. This involves breaking down, relating, distinguishing and identifying. The teacher probes, guides, observes, and acts as a resource. The student discusses, uncovers, lists, dissects and classifies.
5. Synthesis: putting parts together or forming a new whole by categorizing, compiling, relating, reorganizing, modifying and creating. The teacher reflects, extends, analyses, and evaluates. The student creates, generalizes, relates, invents, contrasts, and abstracts.
6. Evaluation: judging the value of material for a given purpose by comparing, justifying, interpreting, supporting and predicting. The teacher accepts, lays bare criteria, and harmonizes. The student defends, predicts, judges and disputes.

Creative Problem Solving Skills

Fluency: generating a large number of ideas or alternative solutions to a problem.

Originality: giving a unique or unusual solution to a problem. The solution which no one else in class gives might be considered original.

Flexibility: seeing things from different points of view or viewing the problem in many different ways. A large number of categories of solutions shows flexibility.

Elaboration: expanding a basic idea by adding to it or building on it. A solution giving enough details to be understood clearly by the observer is elaborated.

Logic Skills by Mark Schoenfiels and Jeannette Rosenblatt

- students develop their innate logical dexterity by stimulating their curiousity with logical problems that are fun to solve

- logic skills have extremely useful applications in conceptualization, critical reading, and debating abilities.

Classification: the abiltiy to classify is basic to everyday life. It is not only important to academic skill but to functioning in peronal areas also. This includes sets and subsets; classifications that are mutuallly exclusive and inclusive; incomplete and complete sets.

Sequencing: Practice improves cause and effect reasoning and the ability to follow schedules and manage time effectively. This includes steps involved in completing an activity, developing a plan based on the natural sequence of steps; planning a spatial sequence in accordance with prescribed rules and converting spatial sequence to verbal description.

Inference: Inference teaches students to gather evidence that leads to solutions. This includes creative guessing to narrow possible solutions, decoding and encoding messages, and applying language skills.

Deduction: Techniques such as process of elimination, trial and error, and combining clues are required to solve problems. This includes reordering information, using negative information and cataloguing information on grids.

Creative Logic: Logic is strengthened with creative thinking to motivate it. This includes students determining whether statements are opinion or propositions, inference or implication, fact or fiction; and matching visual clues with corresponding phrases.

Appendix 2:4
Salient Research Findings on Questioning

Salient Research Findings On Questioning

1. If questioning is the heart of teaching, then we must become better questioners if education is to be enhanced. (Hollingsworth, 1982)

2. Critical thinking is encouraged through the artful use of questioning techniques. (Hollingsworth, 1982)

3. The foremost problem associated with questioning techniques is the tendency to emphasize *recall only.*

4. The literature reports that *effective teachers teach at more complex levels of thinking* - and they are often unaware of it. (Bennett, et al., 1989)

5. *Wait time* as an instructional skill increases the quality and length of a student's response. (Tobin and Rowe)

6. The use of questioning techniques is one way to increase active thinking skills. **" What is needed in both the academic and social arenas is instruction designed to increase active thinking and questioning skills."** (Swicegood, et al., 1989)

7. Singer and Donlan (1982) have noted improvements in reading comprehension when students generate their own questions about stories.

8. Researchers have found that emphasis on higher cognitive questions generally produces better learning than emphasis on fact questions. (Gall, 1984)

9. Improvng the quality of teachers' questions is not sufficient. Students also need to learn the response requirements of different types of questions. (Gall, 1984)

10. What is needed is instruction that is designed to increase active thinking and questioning skills. (Swicegood, et al. , 1989)

11. If questioning is a vital element in organizing and directing thinking, it is important for this skills to be fostered in students. (Swicegood, et al., 1989)

Applying Bloom's Taxonomy to Questioning

A taxonomy of thinking assists the teacher to determine the type of thinking in which the students are to be involved. A taxonomy also guides the teacher in more clearly understanding what is to be learned and how the students will demonstrate that learning. Perhaps most importantly, a taxonomy guides the teacher in the design of questions at different levels of complexity. **These questions not only challenge the students' thinking, but also meet the individual learning needs of the students.** This is particulalry relevant for all age appropriately placed students.

The taxonomy has 6 levels: recall, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. These categories only act as guides. Thinking usually fits into more than one category. General sentence starters for questions in each category are as follows :

Level 1: Recall
Define, Trace, Recall, Name, List

Level 2: Comprehension
Tell why, In your own words, Classify, Relate how, Explain, Provide some examples, Construct a model of, Draw a picture to, Role play what happened...

Level 3: Application
Graph the data, Demonstrate the way to, Which one is most like, Practice, Act out the way a person would, Use whatever means necessary to...Calculate the... Use the technique of ___ to solve the problem...

Level 4: Analysis
What are the component parts of, Which steps are important in the process of, If ___, then___ , What other conclusions can you reach about ___ that have not been mentioned, The difference between the fact and the hypothesis is, the solution would be to, What is the relationship between, What is the pattern of, How would you make a . . .

Level 5: Synthesis
Create, Devise, Make a hypothesis, Finish the incomplete, Change so that, Propose a method, Give the book a new title, Prescribe a new way, Speculate on...

Level 6: Evaluation
In your opinion, Appraise the chances for, Grade or rank the, What do you think will be the outcome, What solution do you favour and why, Which systems are best, worst, Rate the relative value of these ideas . . .

"The act of reading lies in talking about what your have read."
Aidan Chambers, Booktalk, 1989

" Tell Me"

(format for talking about stories)

Focuses on the reader's experience with the text and leads the reader to understand and appreciate that experience by considering the way the Text was formed.

When you first saw the book, even before you read it, what kind of book did you think it was going to be?

What made you think this? Now that you've read it , is it like what you expected?

Tell me about anything that particularly caught your attention?

Tell me about **the parts you liked most?**

Tell me about the parts you didn't like.

Were there parts that bored you?

If you gave up reading, can you tell me where you stopped? (older children)

Was there anything that puzzled you?

...that you thought strange/ that took you by surprise?

Pattern types: Have you ever read other books/stories/poems like this? Tell me about them.

Can you tell me how they are alike/ different?

What sticks in your memory most vividly?

Did you notice things in the story/poem that made a pattern?

(Teachers models finding patterns - picture patterns, prose patterns and idea patterns.

Which character interested you the most?

Is that character the most important person in the story?

What character(s) didn't you like?

Did any of the characters remind you of people you know?

Did we ever get to know what the characters were thinking about?

Who was telling the story? Do we know?

How long did it take for the story to happen?

Did the story happen in the order of events?

Are there parts of the story that took a long time to happen but which are told about very quickly?

When you were reading the story did you feel it was happening now? Or did your feel it was happening in the past and being remembered?

Where did the story happen?

Did it matter where it happened or could it have happened anywhere? Do you remember thinking about the place as you were reading?

Did you feel as if everything was happening to you or were you an observer in the story.

If you were an observer where were you watching from?

If the author asked you what could be improved in the story, what would you say?

What will you tell your friends about it?

What won't you tell them, because it might spoil the story for them or be misleading if you did?

Was this a story you read quickly ? All in one go?
Or slowly? And in separate sessions?

Would you like to read it again? Would you read it differently next time?

When you're reading, do you hear the words being said in your head? If so whose voice is it you hear?

When you think of the story now after all we've said,what is the most important thing about it for you?

We've listened to each other's thoughts about the story, and learned all sorts of things about what we've each noticed. Are you surprised by anything someone else said?

Has anyone said anything that changed your mind? Or helped you enjoy the story more?

Tell me about the things people said that struck you the most.

Compiled by Cheryl Paige

Appendix 2:6
Skillful Classroom Management

Skillful Classroom Management (Kounin 1971, 1977)

TWO : WITHITNESS AND OVERLAPPING

It is recommended that teachers engage in both **manifest overlapping and withitness.**

Withitness is defined as a teacher communicating to the children by her actual behavior (rather than by verbally announcing "I know what's going on") that she knows what the children are doing or has the proverbial "eyes in the back of her head."

Overlapping refers to what the teacher does when she has two matters to deal with at the same time. She /he should somehow attend to both issues simultaneously, not becoming immersed in one issue only, to the neglect of the other.

This first strategy in classroom management cannot be overlooked.

THE TEACHER CONTINUALLY SCANS THE ROOM.
THE TEACHER CONTINUALLY SCANS THE ROOM.
THE TEACHER CONTINUALLY SCANS THE ROOM.

Remember, the teacher is responsible for the safety and learning of **every child** in her or his charge.

THE TEACHER MUST DESIST THE RIGHT CHILD: The teacher must desist the child who **initiated** the behavior, not an onlooker or a contagee. To desist is to knowingly try to stop the behavior.

THE TEACHER MUST STEP IN BEFORE THE BEHAVIOR SPREADS OR INCREASES. Don't let a behavior that is disruptive continue.

LET THE STUDENT KNOW YOU KNOW

- *a look*
- *close proximity*
- *asking the child about the progress of their work task and responding appropriately.*

THE TEACHER MUST DESIST THE MOST SERIOUS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR OCCURRING AT THAT TIME. Thus, if a teacher desisted a child who was daydreaming while two children were running around the classroom, the daydreaming event would be categorized as "the wrong target". Not only do the children involved know that but the rest of the children in the class know that.

WHEN TWO ISSUES OCCUR SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE TEACHER MUST ACKNOWLEDGE BOTH ISSUES IN SOME WAY. The important factor is whether or not the teacher pays **attention** to both issues. The act of "attention to" might be **by way of a remark, a direction, or a simple look.**

In sum, what children see, they categorize in some way. They react to what the teacher does. If she acts promptly and on the correct inappropriate behavior, then they may see her as having "eyes in the back of her head." And if the children perceive him/her as knowing what is going on. she/he is more likely to induce work-like behavior and restrain deviancy than if they see the teacher as not knowing what was going on. It cannot be overstated, however, that overlapping is not adequate unless it leads to some behavior that communicates this to the children.

THREE : MOVEMENT MANAGEMENT

A teacher in a self-contained classroom must manage considerable activity movement; she must initiate, sustain, and terminate many activities. How she/ he manages this movement and the transtion of activity, and her own reaction to disruptions is a significant dimension of classroom management.

TAKE TIME TO SCAN THE ROOM AT TRANSITION POINTS

For example, the teacher may simply scan the room between reading groups or even take two minutes to walk around the room to assure herself and to let the students know that she knows what work is in progress at that point.

MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT IS EXPECTED AT TRANSITION POINTS
For example, the reading group who has just returned to their seat has had their assignment explained to them but it is also outlined on the board for student reference.

MAINTAIN A FOCUS UPON THE ACTIVITY GOAL. DO NOT BE EASILY SWAYED FROM IT.
For example, don't leave the students hanging in "mid-air" or go off to another activity, then return to the original activity.

INTERACTIONS WITH THE STUDENTS SHOULD BE CLARIFICATIONS, NOT NAGGING OR OVERDWELLING
It is a waste of much class time by giving "lectures" to one student or whole class, thus overdwelling on an issue that could be dealt with briefly.

DON'T HAVE SINGLE MEMBERS OF A GROUP DO SOMETHING SINGLY AND SEPARATELY THAT A WHOLE GROUP COULD BE DOING AS A UNIT AT ONE TIME.
For example, if the teacher is teaching a junior grade lesson on shapes, while during her directed lesson she may ask a question of one child in one group, other groups should also have shapes at their desk in order to maximize time spent by all students.

In sum, techniques of movement management are more significant in controlling inappropriate behavior than are techniques of deviancy management as such. In addition, techniques of movement management possess the additional value of **promoting work involvement.**

FOUR: MAINTAINING GROUP FOCUS
Although a teacher may instruct children individually occasionally, most instruction occurs with small or large groups. It is fruitful to see what techniques teachers use to maintain group focus whether the group is large or small.

USE A VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES FOR SELECTING STUDENTS TO ANSWER, EXPLAIN, RESPOND.

APPROACH CHILDREN FOR RESPONSES IN A LESS PREDICTABLE WAY
For example, in a co-operative learning group, don't ask questions to children in the order in which they are seated.

RAISE A QUESTION, THEN ASK A STUDENT TO RESPOND TO IT
In this way, all of the students in the group are responsible for listening to the question as they may be responsible for answering it.

HOLD ALL STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE LEARNING OF THE GROUP
Attend to all students working on a common problem. Have other students in the group doing the same problem at their seats, or in partners and expect them also to be able to converse about it. For example, if one student is doing a problem at the board, ask another student, "Does 47 seem to be the correct calculation in your estimation, Hardeep?

FIVE : GROUP ALERTING
Group alerting refers to the degree to which a teacher attempts to involve non-reporting students in the task at hand, maintain their attention and "keep them on their toes" or alerted. Anything that the teacher does that indicates an overt effort on her part to keep more than one student with whom she is interacting is group alerting.

KEEP THE OTHER STUDENTS ENGAGED !!
- Is this what your group found, Donny?
- In one sentence, what conclusion did your group arrive at, Kam?
- Did Harry make it clear to you that energy can be used, Vanessa? If yes, How? If no, how can you find out about it?

continued

MAKE IT CLEAR WHAT OTHER STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO DO WHEN ONE STUDENT IS RESPONDING

Positive Group Alerting Cues

1. Create "suspense" before calling on a child to respond; "Let's see now, who can . . . ?"

2. Choose students to respond randomly and hold every student in a group responsible for being knowledgeable about the content covered in that group (this is where individualization occurs. What you may expect by way of explanation would be different for students with different knowledge of the language or differing verbal skill. The teacher looks for progress, not only achievement).

3. The teacher calls on the whole group to consolidate learning i.e. Put your hand up if you agree with Susan. "Let's think aobut this one . . . it might fool you. "

SIX: STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability refers to the degree to which the teacher holds the students accountable and responsible for their task performances during group sessions. This entails the teacher determining what the children are doing and to communicate to the students what she/he observes.

Accountability Cues

1. The teacher asks every student in the group to do particular tasks. While one student may be giving information, another may record, and another may be prepared to encourage and and another may only observe.

2. The teacher may ask the group to jot down their answers in a notebook while she observes..

3. The teacher brings other children into focus. What operation would you use, Ingrid?

4. The teacher asks for raised hands and asks children to perform.

5. The teacher circulates among students in a large group or groups working on a problem and observes processes and products.

6. The teacher requires a student to respond and checks the performance.

In summary, this focus upon group managerial techniques in classrooms is intended to not only manage misbehavior but to manage behavior which **fosters purposeful activity.** The business of running a classroom is a complicated set of teacher behaviors having to do with developing a purposeful program which includes a variety of challenging activities; initiating and maintaining movement in classroom tasks with smoothness and speed; coping with more than one event simultaneously; observing and emitting feedback for many different events; directing actions appropriately; maintalning a focus upon a group; and numerous other techniques.

Content Emphasis

Content Emphasis

(adapted from Anne Elliott, 1988)

1. Understand Reasons for Difficulty with Content Texts

- *The writing style in context texts is unfamiliar.* Often, increased use of subordinate clauses makes the sentence structure more complex.
- *The topic sentence may be buried in the paragraph or even at the end.*
- *The writing is often terse and without elaboraion.* The student may have to make too many inferences about unfamiliar concepts and this will deter comprehension.
- *Students often have little prior knowledge to which they can relate new and abstract concepts.*
- *There is the demand that new concepts not only be understood but retained and related to other concepts.*
- *Students are unable to take in information presented in the form of maps, charts, graphs or diagrams.*
- *Reader attitudes are affected since content area materials are generally written at a more difficult level of readibility than instruction materials and this will have an effect on comprehension.*

2. Direct Instruction is Needed

- *Current research supports the idea of direct instruction in this area.* Baumann's (1984) findings supported the efficacy of direct instruction for comprehension skills. Cohen and Stover's (1981) experiements with Grade Six students found success was achieved in directly teaching students to modify word problems to increase their comprehensibility. Armbruster and Gudlerandsen (1986) concluded that students were expected to apply skills without the benefit of instruction. Durkin (1979) concluded that comprehension instruction of any kind did not occur very often and that less than one per cent of instruction time was actually allocated to direct instruction.

Teachers cannot expect students to acquire incidentally those specialized skills and strategies that will enable them to learn independently for the rest of their academic lives.

3. Specific Vocabulary Must Be Taught

- *Junior level students who were taught words through semantic webbing significantly outperformed students who learned the same words through contextual analysis* (Tons-Bronowski, 1983) Semantic maps are simply diagrams that help students see how words and concepts are related to each other. The procedure generally involves a brainstorming session in which students are asked to verbalize associations about a stimulus word as the teacher maps or categorizes their responses on the blackboard, drawing lines between single words or phrases and placing similar words or ideas in columns together. This allows students to verify and expand their own understandings of the concepts and vocabulary before beginning to read. It also provides students with a model for organizing and integrating information when they read.

4. Reading Needs A Purpose

- *If possible, have the students set their own purposes for reading.*
  For example,
  1) provide a series of oral or written statements for the student to respond to prior to reading the text and then read to find out whether they were right or
  2) students generate predictions and then read with that focus.

5. Visual Images Necessary

Any visual aid that helps make abstract conceptions more concrete promotes understanding during reading ; e.g., students draw their own pictures; drama can be used.

6. Helping Students Locate Materials

First, teach by a direct lesson and then provide an immediate opportunity to apply the knowledge needed to develop locational skills : **i.e., do not assume that students know how to use table of contents, index, encyclopedias etc.**

7. Skimming and Scanning Are Important Skills
Direct students to skim a selection (as long as it is appropriate) to look for something specific.

8. Graphics A Special Skill
Teaching the reading of graphics is essential if students are to use such information effectively. Studies indicate that unless students are taught to use and understand graphics, they often ignore them (Spache & Spache, 1986).

As a group, have students stop and discuss any illustrative material they come across.

Have students make their own similar chart or graph as each type is introduced.

9. Systematic Study Skills Can Be Applied to Content Reading
Through good systematic instruction, help the students learn the steps in a study strategy.

Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review

Survey Read the title, the introduction, headings and illustrations in order to get a general idea about what it is about.

Question Children formulate questions that they rhink might be answered in the selection.

Read Read to find the answers to questions

Recite Children recite from memory the answers to the questions

Review Review the entire selection recalling the author's important ideas and think of ways to use the ideas learned. (Alexander, 1988)

Evaluation

(adapted from L. Shalaway, 1989)

FIRSTLY, DETERMINE A DESTINATION

1. Set goals and establish long term plans. Common sense tells you that you won't know when you've arrived somewhere if you don't know where you're going.

2. Find out what your mandated objectives are. Does your school, family of schools or the Ministry of Education specify certain goals? Are there certain programs or objectives about which you, as a teacher, should be knowledgeable?

3. Establish your own curiclum priorities. Keeping in mind the curriculum guidelines,what subjects or topics will you emphasize?

4. Establish your goals for the class. How should students be different after spending a year with you? What will they know then (academically and socially) that they don't know now?

5. Establish your goals for individual students. What are your special goals for mainstreamed, integrated and age appropriately placed students? Are there ways for you to teach your students how to set their own goals that are in keeping with yours?

6. Establish goals for yourself. What are your personal and professional goals? In what way will you be able to use *Supervision for Growth* to explore your own growth?

7. Know your students' characteristics. Have a guideline in your mind of Piaget's characteristics of children and plan to observe and evaluate accordingly (see References for *Observation of Children).*

8. Assess your students' interests. How can you develop curiculum around those interests? What expertise or experience do your students bring to the class this year to enrich the environment? Use these interests as an opportunity to make the school year more relevant for them as well as a unique learning experience for you.

9. Assess your interests. How can your personal passion for learning translate to exciting lessons and activities? What new learning or research are you undertaking this year to nourish your enthusiasm for being a student?

Keep this list of goals handy to use as a reference throughout the year. Revise it as necessary .

SECONDLY, WHAT SKILLS AND ABILITIES DO THE STUDENTS BRING TO YOUR CLASS?. . . GATHER BASELINE DATA

REFERENCES :

• see *Alternative Techniques for Evaluating Reading in the Classroom.* This provides :
a) a variety of teacher-recommended sources for determining the appropriateness of the reading levels of materials being used or intended for use.
b) a selection of means for recognizing whether a student's attitide to reading is apt to help or hinder him.
c) a battery of informal measures for diagnosing reading levels.

• see *Mathquest* and other Teaching Resource books for comprehensive sections on Evaluation.

1. Develop a few short tests to give students at the beginning of the year. For example, where guidelines indicate that certain tasks should be mastered, pull sample problems from a test and use it as a pretest. Be sure to include skills and concepts students should have already mastered. Identify weaknesses and problem areas. The same test can be used to check on progress during the year.

2. Continue to use pretests throughout the year. Before a major curriculum unit, find out what each student already knows about the particular topic and related skills or concepts. Plan lessons accordingly.

3. Make an evaluation folder for each student. Place the pretest results inside, along with other diagnostic information you collect throughout the year. Many of the teachers in North York also prepare evaluation folders for students to file work in regularly.

4. Get to know your students first, then examine grades, comments and standardized test scores in students' cumulative folders. Proceed cautiously as previews could colour your expectations, however, there is a lot of potentially useful information in a cumultive folder in determining childrens' special needs, both physical and academic.

5. Observe individual behaviors, looking for strengths, needs and problems. Note these in separate student folders for your own evaluation records.

6. Find record-keeping ideas that are meaningful for you personally and set them up for convenient use in your classroom. Many creative record-keeping ideas are available in *9 Through 12* and *Look, Hear* as well as in other documents that offer lots of variety for individual teacher needs. For accountability, these records prove invaluable.

THIRDLY, CHART THE DIRECTION

1. Review your goals and priorities and begin to schedule instructional units amd activites. Allocate the most time to subjects you think are the most important or the skill areas where students need the most help. If you have a large number of students who are working decidedly below the expected grade level, decide time allocations according to their needs and document student progress so that you can see clearly that gaps are being accounted for.

2. Identify conceptual segments that can be learned separately before they are integrated or reorganized into larger segments. These concepts can be approaced in two or three minute reviews or games or in Bell Work activities to make learning easier.

3. Plan some activities around students' special interests and needs. This does not mean that the teacher only teaches what the children want to learn. Rather, this means that students will be more easily engaged in learning about something which has meaning for them.

4. Decide in advance how you'll teach; which instructional strategies; and grouping (whole group, small group, partners) will best serve students' needs.

LASTLY, ARE YOU THERE YET?

1. Use daily reviews to judge how students are progressing. Use homework checks, learning games, group discussions, random questioning and so on.

2. Experts include review as part of every lesson. Use review as a strategy for assessment as well as for communicating objectives to students.

3. Continue using pretests and gathering diagnostic information to decide which skills or knowledge students need to acquire next.

4. Assess learning in many different ways. Include paper and pencil tests, academic games where mastery is demonstrated, participation in group discussions or projects etc. Ask students, **"What did you learn today?"**

5. Make sure students can apply or transfer new knowledge to other situations. Learning hasn't occurred until they can, according to mastery learning experts.

6. Students must master material to the point of overlearning to be able to apply it to new situations.

7. Take advantage of the help available from testing and evaluation experts in your family of schools. The experts in your family of schools can help you construct good tests, offer insights on commercially available tests and teach you how to interpret stnadardized test results.

8. Emphasize learning over competition to students. Instill the idea in your students that the test will show whether more work is still needed in an area and where that work should be concentrated.

9. If students have not learned or retained what has been taught to them, reteach the lesson using new strategies or approaches.

10. If students have never been taught the necessary skills to approach the work, outline the preceding skills in reviews, offer lessons in the necessary prerequisite skills, don't expect the student to master four years work in one year, but expect them to get to the next step.

11. Compare the assessment information collected earlier in the year with later evaluations so you can target areas for improvement.

12. Have students record what they think they know about a topic before they study it, then review their statements after the unit. In this way the students will be able to see how far they've come and will be pleased with the progress they've made. Also, this will demonstrate to them an approach which they can integrate into their own set of stategies for learning new material.

13. Recognize each student's successes. Recognize even the small successes (see unit on Praise). Let the parents know when a child has reached a goal or a milestone.

14. Use written tests as only one way of evaluating student progress.
a) Observation is a good way to evaluate learning. Observe students in practical problem solving situations - collecting pizza or hot dog money, setting up audio-visual equipment, looking up information in an encyclopedia.

b) Use oral and open-book quizzes. Many teachers believe that oral tests are more accurate and less threatening than paper and pencil tests.

c) Have students test each other. For example, students enjoy giving each other spelling words and playing spelling games. With careful observation on the part of the teacher, results of tests in this more relaxed situation will be another welcome addition in the student folder.

d) Ask students to help you write test questions. This is an excellent review technique that involves the students more with the material. Social studies and Environmental Studies particularly lend themselves to this evaluation technique.

e) Use frequent small tests instead of fewer large ones. This minimizes test anxiety, encourages small successes, and reveals problems sooner.

15. Always remember that if a student is working well below the expected grade level, you must eveluate progress and growth, not achievement at that grade level only. It is purposeful to include pre-requisistes to the skill being tested on written tests, and then replace a problem for those students who have great gaps in learning (i.e. students with disrupted or no previous schooling) in order that those students have every opoportunity for succeed also. (Shalaway, 1989)

If all or at least some of these suggestions can be used, the evaluation program will offer both the teacher and the student a much **more complete understanding of the learning taking place.** Since **evaluation is a feedback process focusing on opportunities for individual improvement,** students have some opportunity to compete with themselves. Some shift in this direction is likely to be beneficial both to the developing of self-concept of the young student as well as the sense of his or her control over his or her own education. (Shapiro, et al., 1986)

Appendix 2:9 Instructional Cues to Improve Class Involvement

Instructional Cues to Improve Class Involvement

1. Increase the variety of cues. Instructional cues differ in their strength and relevance for different students. For example, it is likely that students who are verbally competent will learn more easily with verbal cues (Cronbach and Snow, 1976). Students who feel more comfortable with graphic presentations or or other forms of visual stimuli (such as the ESL/D concern) in the regular classroom may learn more easily with such cues. Cues that are likely to evoke appropriate and relevant acrivities for some students may not be as effective as for other students. Teachers need to be able to give cues that involve perceptual, visual, tactile and other senses to ensure effective learning by most students. (Levin/Long, 1981. P 35)

2. Adapt Cues To Class Needs. Some teachers plan their instruction and direct their attention to only a small number of students in the classroom (Dahloff, 1971; ,Good and Brophy, 1971). However, if teachers direct their attention to a small (four or five) but representative sample of students in a class, they can determine whether the cues are effective or ineffective for **the entire range of students in the class.** When teachers alter the cues or provide additional ones, they are more likely to be responding to the needs of most of the students. (Levin & Long, 1981, p. 36). This may be misinterpreted to mean that standards become so low as to be non-existent. This is not the case. The emphasis here is on providing a range of learning interests to accomodate both the student with the enriched background and the student with the limited background. For example, when a teacher teaches a large group lesson, by way of review, he or she may include a wide range of examples so as to keep the interest of learners with needs at both ends of the scale. For example, in a lesson on two-digit multiplication, the teacher may remind the class in a humorous way about Mr. Ones running over to Mr. Tens house every day to borrow some ones and by way of extending the lesson, point to the logic of moving over one more space when multiplying by 100's, thereby accomodating both the less developed and the highly developed learner. The natural extension of this is to identify and help the least involved students **first** with follow-up tasks and then attend to the students who have been able to start on their own and are in need of encouragement and challenge a little later in the work period. Good teachers seem to be doing this naturally, but, in fact, it is a strategy which they have developed as a result of expe.ience and observation of learning in the classroom.

3. Provide direct interaction with the learning materials *and* the teacher. This direct interaction produces higher levels of achievement than merely listening to or watching the interaction.

4. Clearly organize instructional materials. When instructional materials are clear and organized , students are more likely to be actively involved in their learning.

5. Supervise instructional groups to produce a higher degree of involvement. In general, studies indicate that small study groups without adult supervision produce very low levels of student involvement in learning, but group discussions supervised by teachers produce a higher degree of involvement. (Good and Beckerman, 1978; McDonald, 1976; Anderson and Scott, 1978; Stallings and Kaskowitz, 1974)

6. Start with what the students already know about the topic. For the low-achieving age appropriately placed student, *this precisely is the crux of successful use of instruction.* Students who do not acquire the necessary prerequisites, no matter what method of instruction is used, spend significantly less active learning time on subsequent units in the same academic area (Hecht, 1977). The strong evidence on the role of cognitive prerequisites points to higher levels of motivation, ability to understand the instruction, increases chances of success in the performance of a skill and more involvement in learning. The teacher needs to find various ways of gathering evidence about students' preparedness for particular learning

tasks and provide opportunities for students to obtain the prerequisites. Tests during the learning process, summaries of learned materials and reviews all give the teacher information about student progress and areas in which improvement is needed.

7. Use adequate and clear instructions. Presenting facts and directions clearly and information accurately, and avoiding unnecessary difficulties or misleasding activities also increases active student involvement.

8. Link cognitive content to interests of the students to promote more learning. Classroom instruction about matters of interest to students motivates them to participately actively. This should not be interpreted to mean that the teacher fails to recognize the formal academic curriculum for that grade. What it means for example, is that if the teacher is doing a unit on graphing, in demonstrating for the students, she may graph favorite rock groups of the class. To increase the interest value and to get as many students as possible involved, she may have students bring samples of music for the class to vote on. She is covering the curriculum for that grade at the same time as she/ he keeps the students excited about the learning that is ahead.

9. Identify and help the least involved students first. The teacher's interest in students and their needs or "private attention" can inmprove motivation and involvement. Students may be uninvolved for different reasons – boredom, anxiety, fatigue, personal problems, inability to understand the instruction or other matters.

Instructional Cues to Improve Class Involvement

Feedback-Corrective Procedures

Feedback-Corrective Procedures

Much evidence supports the powerful contribution of feedback and corrective procedures to **learning effectiveness and student performance.** (Anderson, 1973; Arlin, 1973; Binor, 1974; Block, 1970) provide insight into how, **specifically,** feedback-corrective procedures effect high expectations for both students and teachers in the classroom.

Brief Summary of Research About Feedback-Corrective Procedures
(by Levin and Long, 1981)

Feedback and corrective procedures related to an appropriate standard *help most students,* regardless of intelligence or aptitude, to attain the desired educational goals.

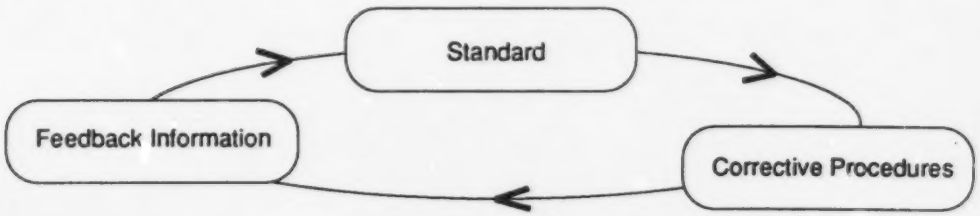
When groups of students are consistently provided with feedback and corrective procedures during a series of related tasks, they gradually need fewer corrective prodedures to reach the preset standard.

While students achievement improves, so do their learning habits.

When students are capable of mastering the standard set by the teacher, they develop greater confidence in their ability to learn and greater interest in the subject matter.

The importance of recognizing the interrelated cycle of the following components cannot be overstated. Firstly, feedback and correction includes a definition of a **standard of performance** for a student, class or teacher (Levin, et al., 1981, p. 15). Secondly, it involves a process whereby precise, relevant, and valid evidence are gathered and reported to the students and the teacher. This provides **information** regarding what has been achieved and what is still needed to be learned or taught in order to reach **a defined standard.** Of considerable consequence for all age appropriately placed students, it includes the **use of corrective procedures** by which gaps in the learning, mistakes and other misunderstandings can be relearned or corrected.

Relationship Among Components of the Feedback-Corrective System



(Levin/Long, 1981)

The strength of this system is that **it actually alters the process of learning and the process of instruction.** In order to be effective, feedback and corrective procedures (in relation to a preset standard) are needed at **regular intervals during the learning process** before errors and misunderstandings accumulate.

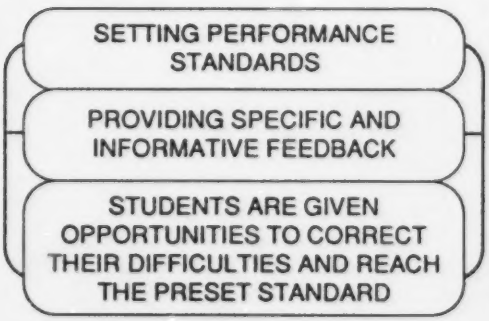
Setting A Defined Standard Is Essential To The Feedback-Corrective Cycle

* *When knowledge of a student's performance is being compared with an explicit criterion, it indicates to the teacher and the student whether or not the student is ready to continue* **learning successfully.** If, for example, the student needs more practice than time permits in class, this provides a guide by which the teacher may assign meaningful homework.

* When knowledge of a student's performance is given without relation to a specific and well-defined criterion, neither the teacher nor the student can determine the student's readiness for further learning.

* *Feedback on what has and has not been achieved is essential for modifying the learning process.* The teacher can alter the instruction or materials and adapt the learning objectives or segments of instruction that have not been effective.

Cycle of Feedback Information


SETTING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
PROVIDING SPECIFIC AND INFORMATIVE FEEDBACK
STUDENTS ARE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO CORRECT THEIR DIFFICULTIES AND REACH THE PRESET STANDARD

THE STRENGTH OF THESE COMPONENTS DEPENDS ON THEIR INTERRELATEDNESS

Model For Positive Feedback-Corrective Procedures

Giving students *grades only* do not help teachers improve the teaching and learning process. Students may interpret this information in different ways; it may motivate some to work harder, but it may discourage others. Since grades do not indicate to pupils what they still need to learn, even the most highly motivated students have difficulty using grades as a basis for directing their own learning.

Knowledge of correct and incorrect results of each specific item in a learning or testing situation has *little or no effect* in improving learning (Angell, 1949; Karabinus, 1966; Karraker, 1967; Plowman and Stroud, 1942; Sasswnrath and Garverick, 1965; Spencer and Barker, 1969; Sturges, 1969). According to Sturges (1972), information regarding the asccuracy of each response is too specific and does not give students a general perspective of what they have or have not learned.

Look for different ways of developing student interest, self-confidence and student attitudes. These may include marks, stickers, privileges, praise, rewards...Studies over the years point to at least 180 different types of feedback behaviors at the disposal of teachers (Zahorik, 1968).

It must be clear to students *why* they are being praised or critisized and *how* they should modify their behavior. Teachers should consider verbal behavior in light of the *information* it conveys to students (Nuthall, 1976).

Comments in conjunction with grades or scores are likely to have a substantial effect, *if* they provide specific feedback information. The feedback, followed by opportunities for students to relearn or correct their mistakes to reach the preset standard, significantly improves most students' learning.

Timing is essential to an effective use of feedback. Students should receive

feedback when improvement is still possible.

Emphasizing what students *have* learned is more likely to encourage them and give them confidence in their ability to learn.

The most effective corrective procedure for students above the second grade involves small study groups of two or three. Students find the questions they missed, and the students who answered them correctly take turns explaining the correct answers (Bloom, 1978). If the groups are heterogeneous in terms of student achievement, the corrective process may become co-operative when no single student acts as the 'tutor' for the others.

The outcome of feedback-corrective procedures for students, particularly for those students who are " at risk "is that they learn **"how to learn". They begin to understand the process of reaching an externally defined standard which they gradually begin to define for themselves.** Once established, this skill will permit students to evaluate a task, set a high standard for achieving a personal goal and have the knowledge of how to self-correct with self-confidence to achieve that goal.

Guidelines for Effective Praise

Guidelines For Effective Praise

EFFECTIVE PRAISE :

1. **is delivered contingently.**
2. **names the specific accomplishment.**
3. **shows spontaneity, variety and other signs of credibility; suggests clear attention to the student's accomplishment.**
4. **rewards attainment of specified performance criteria**
5. **provides information to students about their competnece or the value of their accomplishments.**
6. **orients students toward better appreciation of their own task-related behavior and thinking about problem solving.**
7. **uses students' own prior accomplishments as the context for describing present accomplishments.**
8. **recognizes noteworthy effort or success at difficult tasks for *this* student.**
9. **attributes success to effort and ability, implying that similar successes can be expected in the future.**
10. **encourages students to expend effort on the task because they enjoy the task and/or want to develop task-relevant skills.**
11. **focuses students' attention on their own task-relevant behavior**
12. **fosters appreciation of task-relevant behavior through logical attribution after the process is completed.**

KNOW THAT PRAISE IS INEFFECTIVE WHEN IT :

- is delivered randomly or unsystematically
- provides no specific information at all
- encourages students to compete with others
- is given without regard for the effort expended or the meaning of the accomplishment for this student.
- intrudes into the ongoing process, distracting attention from task-relevant behavior.

(adapted from Jene Brophy's work, 1981)

Peer Coaching to Enhance Reflection

Peer Coaching To Enhance Reflection

In North York, peer coaching is a major focus of the *Supervision for Growth* program. Peer coaching is designed to set the teacher up for success by allowing colleagues to work together to improve teachers' success in the classroom. Since *"The Coaching of Teaching"* appeared in Educational Leadership (Joyce and Showers, 1982), peer coaching in schools is becoming a recognized method through which the growth of teachers is promoted. "Coaching" has been operationally defined as "the provision of on-site, personal support and technical assistance for teachers". (Baker and Showers, 1984) *Peer coaching* often takes the form of two teachers who attend the same inservice training, collaborate on lesson development, observe one another as a lesson is taught (or observe a videotape) and then offer constructive criticism about the lesson. (Neubert/Bratton, 1987) This form of growth then is designed to be non-evaluative, non-judgemental and non-threatening. Peer coaching has been interpreted by many teachers to provide them with **opportunities to reflect on their work.** However, it is essential to note that for some teachers, peer coaching is seen as yet another method by which reflection is inhibited. For example, teachers who enter a peer coaching situation unwillingly will only mimic the behavior that is asked for, consequently, **this opportunity for reflection must be enveloped willingly.** It is the purpose of this section to familiarize the reader with how peer coaching among teachers fosters their opportunities to reflect on their work.

Results of coaching programs have been reported in detail by Baker and Showers (1984), Showers (1983, 1984), Sparks and Bruder (1987), et al. These results are as follows :

1. Coached teachers generally (though not always) practise new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill in the actual moves of a new teaching strategy than do uncoached teachers. (Showers, 1985)

2. Coached teachers use the new strategies more appropriately in terms of their own instructional objectives and the theories of specific models of teaching. (Showers, 1982, 1984)

3. Coached teachers exhibit greater long-term retention of knowledge about and skill with strategies in which they have been coached and, as a group, increase the appropriateness of use over time. (Baker, 1983)

4. Coached teachers are much more likely to teach the new strategies to their students, ensuring that students understand the purpose of the strategy and the behaviors expected of them when using the new strategy. (Showers, 1984)

5. While Lortie notes that considerable effort is being expended today to foster closer working relationships among teachers, he points to the substantial impediments to close working relationships among teachers (Lortie, 1975). **"Yet", he says, "teachers may decide that the great effort to intensify collegial work ties is worth the price."**

6. Many teachers who have worked in peer coaching situations have said that having "a professional colleague as a partner" was one of the main personal benefits of the Peer Coaching Project (Sparks/Bruder, 1987).

The results of experimentation and collegiality imply that not only are teachers now free to reflect-on-action but are encouraged to reflect-about-action, on the context of action in the effort to revise what they are doing, reshape curriculum and ask critical questions.

Lyman and Morehead (1987) suggest that isolation is a major job-related concern for today's teacher. Joyce describes teachers as "tennis players who learned to play on a squash court by themselves." He states that both very good teachers and very poor teachers manifest the lack of a metric that comes from watching other people "play". In his studies of relationships with districts that involve staff developing 30 to 40 days a year, Joyce is struck by teachers' isolation from their craft (Joyce, 1987). What is required then, is a model for teachers that promotes a knowledge of their craft through reflection, a model that does not rely on teachers' isolation. Teachers observing teachers and teachers observing their own practice in the classroom through research are the two avenues that lead to that model.

Model for Parent-Teacher Communication

(adapted from Shalaway, 1981)

1. Cultivate parents built-in capability to accomplish more when they work together with the teacher rather than separately. The parent-teacher partnership provides an interesting equation, e.g., the "sum of the parts is greater than the whole." When one considers the long hours devote d to planning, developing materials, and trying new methods to help a diverse population of students succeed, it seems sensible to incorporate the help of parents. (Green, 1988)

2. Ask for parent input. Parents and only parents are able to to shed light on the non-academic, non-school oriented side of their child. The life that a child leads outside of the school can provide clues about how best to motivate her/him and involve her/him within the school building. For example, some questions a teacher might want to pursue include :

1. What does the youngster do in her/his free time?
2. What does the youngster like talking about?
3. How does he react when he is reprimanded?
4. What seems to be an effective way for him/her to get tasks completed?
5. Does he/she have specific jobs/ responsibilites at home? Does he/ she remember to do them?
6. Are there certain television programs or kinds of books that she/he enjoys at home? (adapted from Green, 1988).

3. Prepare handouts which can be sent out to parents on a regular basis sharing the latest news. For example, it might be called "News From The Crew in 202". It could have an established format and parents would be invited to comment on "the news" and return their comments for display.

4. Acknowledge the changes in the nuclear family. Statsitics show that one child out of four now lives in a single parent family, that there are a higher number of children in the school system who would by "middle class standards" be considered disadvantaged and that in most families, both parents work away from the home. This is life in Canada in the 1990's and one must assume that most parents are genuinely concerned about their children. (McAfee, 1986)

5. Tailor communications to your audience. All communications should be clear, expressed *in plain language* and to the point. Don't patronize. Find out what communication you have success with and then proceed to work together as a team. (Shalaway, 1989) For example, the following exerpt from *At My Wit's End* by Erma Bombeck illustrates this point :

> When my son Bruce, entered the first grade, his report card said, "He verbalizes during class and periocically engages in excursions up and down the aisles."
>
> In the sixth grade, his teacher said, "What can we do with a child who does not relate to social interaction?" (I ran home and got out my dicitonary.)
>
> At the start of his senior year, Bruce's advisor said, "This year will hopefully open up options for your son so he can realize his potential and aim for tangible goals."
>
> On my way out, I asked the secretary, "Do you speak English? (She nodded.) "What was the teacher telling me?"
>
> "Bruce is goofing off, " the secretary said flatly.
>
> "I don't know if education is helping Bruce or not, but it's certainly helping my vocabulary!"

6. Good listening skills are essential in home-school relations. Listening skills can be improved; it taskes practice, a few simple strategies, and the proper mindset.

* Read about Active Listening Skills, e.g., *Teacher Effectiveness Training* by Thomas Gordon

* Be alert for visual cues, body language and other nonverbal signs. Pay attention even to offhand comments that may give insight to personalities and family situations.

continued

Model for Parent-Teacher Communication

* Find out what parents know about what goes on in school and in your classroom. If their academic or social expectations are too high or too low, explain what you think are realistic expectations.

* Try paraphrasing what the parents have said to make sure that you understand.

(adapted from Shalaway, 1989).

7. If there is an expectation for something you want students to do at home on a regular basis, give the parents clear directions of why they are doing it, what exactly you want them to do and how they play an important role.

* For example, *"Booktime"*, by Cheryl Paige, et al. is a North York handbook offered in a number of languages which clearly delineates how parents can read at home with their primary children to improve their success in school. It is to be provided to parents by the teacher with an explanation and support.

* Penny Willert of Blaydon P.S. offers a set of home learning activities which can be used throughout the year for her junior grade students. It consists of listing the learning activity on one side and the related skills it teaches on the other side. This allows the parents to involve their children in active, meaningful learning activities throughout the year at home. Following are some exerpts from this list :

Learning Activity	Related Skill
choosing T.V. shows	decision-making
keeping a journal at home	language, writing, organization
letter writing to friends, relatives	language, writing, organization
summarizing sports events	sequencing, comprehension

(adapted by Beverly L. Dexter; Lynchburg, Virginia)

8. Ensure that work at home or homework is not a source of agony for both parents and students. Homework is the most common link between home and school life and even if parents philosophically acknowledge the benefits of homework, they resent having to struggle with a child frustrated with assignments that are too difficult. (Shalaway, 1989) So :

- assign tasks and activities that allow students to practice skills they've already learned
- guide students through sample homework problems
- explain the purpose of the assignment and why it's important to complete it
- be available to answer questions about homeowork at a private time as not all students want to ask their questions out loud
- praise children's efforts in completing homework and encourage parents to do the same
- encourage parents to create an atmosphere conducive to completing homework, e.g., homework should not be done in front of a blaring television
- collect, check or discuss any homework that you have assigned. You are better to give homework once a week and check it properly and keep track of your observations than to assign it three times a week and not monitor it at all due to time constraints.
- it is very important to be sensitive to problems or frustrations which students express about their homework. (Shalaway, 1989)

9. Take advantage of all opportunities to make parents feel welcome and assure them that they can support their children at home.

10. Ask parents to shaare their talents in the classroom and use this as an opportunity to build the home-school connection.

11. Accord the same respect to parents that you would like to recieve.

This is particularly true in parent conferences. Plan and prepare for conferences as well as you would for your classes. Take particular consideration of parents who need translators. Allow at least double the time for parents who require it. In the long run, your teacher-parent connection will be enhanced.

12. Expect some problems in dealing with parents Bear in mind, some parents are better at some tasks than others. Start slowly and establish your home-school connection. If you want to involve parents more, have some idea in your mind for which activity they will be best suited.

13. Become knowledgeable about the cultural make-up of your school and try to incorporate this knowledge when communicating to encourage parents to feel welcome in the school.

Appendix 2:14
Characteristics of a "Good Teacher"

John Miller, a teacher from Elia Jr. High, gave the following assignment to his grade seven class.

What are the characteristics of a good teacher? Give your own opinions.
The following is a collection of the results . . . hot off the press !

HARDEEP
A teacher should encourage students to like and enjoy what they're learning.

A teacher should expect good work from a class.

Kristina
A good teacher encourages us to do our best at what we're doing.

A good teacher expects us to finish the work he/she gave us to do.

Lena
I think a teacher should be fun but serious when necessary.

A good teacher should be able to control the class and not let them go wild.

A teacher should treat you your own age - not like you're in kindergarten when you're not and not like you're in high school when you're not.

Murat
. . .They should try to teach the students with easy examples or not to make it so complex.

Tina
. . . when the teacher has a little sense of humour because our class likes to laugh sometimes.

. . . when the teacher helps us after school if we need any extra help because it would really help us to do better in school.

Mary
A good teacher insists that we do our best.

A good teacher encourages us to work hard and study so we could learn and not fool around.

A good teacher permits us to work with our friends when we have behaved well.

A good teacher demands silence when a lesson is being taught.

A good teacher expects us to do our homework that was given to us and learn from it.

A good teacher should know what he or she is teaching the students.

Gillanda
A good teacher should listen to his or her students for their opinions.

Sonia
Good Teaching Methods. A 'good' teacher will always come across clear and add a bit of fun in the lesson.

Farrah
Being patient really helps other people know they can count on you to explain a question or anything they don't understand.

Seriousness is a good quality to have because the students have to know you can be stern with them.

Being strict should become a habit. The students have to realize that you're being firm for their own good.

Being fun is a good quality to have. It can make learning an interesting experience for the students and it makes them eager to learn more.

Bujar
A teacher has to show the class how to do the work before giving it.

Shivani
I think a teacher should be straightforward so it wouldn't confuse the students.

Elisa
A good teacher should be funny so that the class laughs at their jokes but not so funny that the class won't /couldn't concentrate on their work.

Chadwick
A good teacher should be nice and not say something to hurt a child.

A good teacher should hear a kid's side of a story.

A good teacher should not be ashamed to ask other children or grown-ups (if they do't know the answer).

Ruby
. . . not to be extra nice to a certain student because they work well or they're a very intelligent student.

Sandra
A good teacher is honest because if she isn't honest, how would you know when to believe her?

A good teacher is always willing to listen to others' ideas and not to be so conceited or students will not feel they can talk openly.

A good teacher has a way of teaching so that the students will find it more easy to learn.

A good teacher is fun to be with but knows when to put her foot down or else students will disrespect their teachers.

A good teacher treats everyone equal because other students might feel left out.

Stephen
A good teacher should be able to have confidential conversations with one of their students.

A good teacher should be able to give extra help to a student at an arranged time.

When the whole class is going to read a novel together, it should be interesting for everyone.

A good teacher encourages students to come to them when they are in trouble or need help.

When teaching a lesson and not everyone understands it, a good teacher will help those few students.

A good teacher provides extra activities in the classroom other then school work.

A very good teacher has a way of making learning fun.

Joann
A good teacher is organized. . . has everyting handy and never wastes time.

And finally, for the characteristic that was named in almost every assignment, Onkar said it best,

Teachers should be kind, like if somebody asks you how to do something, even though you taught them three times, teach them again, don't get mad.

From Teachers to Teachers

Thanks to these few effective teachers who were "pressed for time", or who only had "a few minutes" but still found a few minutes to share their dedication to the teaching profession. A sample of teacher comments follows:

A Sampling From Ms. M.'s Philosophy

- Everyone is successful in some areas and not in others.
- We must start from where the child is.
- Anyone who does not learn from their mistakes fails, the person who makes the most mistakes and learns from them is the most successful
- Learning is for life, it never stops, it only changes form
- Learning is hard work **and** lots of fun.

Ms. M.'s "Tricks of the Trade"

1. constant observation of children in various situations
2. peer-coaching: nobody is on the receiving end at all times
3. a balance of skills and creative activities
4. use of behavior modification programs for individuals when needed

Reflections on Teaching Practice by Mrs. W.

I think the most significant contribution we can make to youngsters in the classroom is to ensure that they are successful in their endeavors. This success does not just happen, but must be actively sought. Effective teachers assess the dynamics of their classroom and use acquired, practiced skills to enhance individual and collective achievement. I work to establish this notion of life-long learners in each of my students – insisting at all times that they perform to their utmost, secure in the knowledge that if they misjudge (as we all sometimes do), that I'll be there to help them recover.

Miss J's "Recipes for a Busy Kitchen"

Students will live up to expectations made of them. If you, as the teacher expect them to succeed, provide the means, teach them the skills and teach them to believe in themselves . . . they can succeed. . . . Since I run a program with a structured whole class lessons, small group, individual instruction, co-operative learning group settings, and activity-based learning centres, this provides the opportunity for me to teach new concepts to all students and then individualize with further instruction with a small group.

Ms. B's Comments On Variety . . .

Variety is important! Teach for short periods. get the students involved, teach them something new and important. Hook the topic onto somehting they already know. Teach them something you have just learned yourself.

On Respect . . .

Students want to be treated fairly, with respect. They do not want to be "different" or stand out as "disabled". My students are treated with respect, with firm consistent expectations for their behavior and quality of work. They are expected to make wise choices about dealing with other people, conforming to class rules and challenging themselves to improve their own level of academic growth.

Mr. Z Presents A Philosophy

. . . I found confirmation of somehting I've always believed - that the best and most effective teachers are those who have good interpersonal skills and who value empathy, sensitivity and rapport with students **in addition to** being knowledgeable and skillful in their craft.

. . . At risk students need to experience success and receive recognition for it on a daily basis. They need to feel they are learning and growing.

. . . Progress comes wth successive stages of assessment, programming and program modifications supported with patience, flexibility (using a variey of different strategies) and regular one-on-one or small group instruction.

"Where Do I Begin?" from Mrs. I

I suppose that my philosophy concerns the accessibility of education to all at whatever level. Education must mean something to children. . . . I really want

each person to experience success and to find joy in learning. Probably the best way for me to accomplish this is through literature. In my SK/I class, we have come to know famous authors and illustrators of children's books. Personally, I think my students can relate to the little boy in *"The Polar Express"* . . .I heard a quote from Jean Malloch – **"A story is better felt than telt"** – which made a lot of sense to me!"

In our writing program, students write me letters and leave them in my mailbox. No matter what stage of development they are at, students write and are given back replies. I leave messages around the room for students. . . I guess I could go on and on about pattern books, big books, etc., but it would take too long! . . . Thanks for listening. . . .

Mr. S. "What I Do"
In my classroom, I try to foster an atmosphere of acceptance of every child. . . the kids have to know that if they make a mistake or get in trouble, you can be angry or disappointed but ypu still like them. . . . My behavioral and work habits expectations are well defined and consistent .Devise a record system that works for you to track children – activities, strengths, weaknesses, behavior, etc.

These images of effective teachers linger on our minds. They begin to clarify the picture of what people mean when they say "An effective teacher? Oh, you know a good class in the first five minutes!" It is nothing short of exciting to think that an edcuational system can create more of these good classes by contributing to the professionalization of the teacher culture.

Case Study

One kind of program which was a focus for observation of the success of AAP students was what educational literature refers to as the "half-step" or the "accelerated learning" program. This was the program offered in 1985-6 to many students across North York who were overaged at that time; that is, students who had been retained in a grade at one time, students who had been placed a year behind their peer group because of English language concerns and /or students whose parents had requested that their children be retained in that grade. The overaged student was offered an opportunity to cover two years of work in one and then rejoin their same-aged peers. These programs were designed to upgrade students' academic achievement. As was stated earlier in this paper, these programs had been taught by "the right teacher". . . "the perfect teacher for those students". The following is a transcript of one of several interviews which serves to demonstrate what effective teaching strategies looked like in such program.

Mrs. C. taught a "half step" program in 1986 to upgrade a class of AAP students from Grade 4 to grade 6 in one year. The following are excerpts of the interview in which this program was discussed :

MORE FAVOURABLE PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO FOR LANGUAGE.
These students needed more direct teaching, more individualization, more one on one, more testing.

EXCEPTIONAL PLACEMENT.
There was one student who had exceptional learning needs . . . he turned out to be educable and required a special program that could not be provided by a regular classroom teacher.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING.
I spent the first two weeks giving one test a day to ascertain exactly what these students' needs were. I tested again at Christmas and again toward the end of the year. Although this testing was time- consuming, I would do it again in a junior classroom. Also, I kept more antecdotal notes.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS.
I didn't have a homework policy outside of the school one which stated that students in grade 7 should do about an hour a night. But I stressed the importance of doing that little bit of extra work at home. Homework was comprised of short exercises to drill concepts and completion work. I talked extensively about what an opportunity this (the half-step program) was for them and that if they were willing to do their homework, that this would help them.

Q. In what way did you let the students know what was expected of them?
A. I told them.

I think teacher attitude is important. I believed these kids could do it. I told them what an opportunity this was, I told them that they had matured and were able to handle the program. I let them know in as many ways as I could that they could be successful in the following year.

This interview serves to demonstrate several aspects of effective teaching practice. Although this teacher did not say "I'm a effective teacher and these are the specific strategies I use", the mission that she had for "her class" demonstrates *one combination* of ingredients necessary for students and their success. It also points to the fact that not every teacher has expertise in all effective strategies outlined in this paper. For example, the art of questioning was not discussed. We may assume that it ranged anywhere from fair to fantastic. However, when clusters of behavior that are put together into certain describable sets of activities, there does seem to be **a relationship between teacher behavior and pupil achievement. (RISE, 1982, p. 35)**